

Sexey's School

Cole Road, Bruton, BA10 0DF

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress and their GCSE results in most subjects are significantly higher than the national average.
- Students behave exceptionally well and are keen learners.
- Good teaching can be seen in most subjects, especially English, mathematics, science, history and art.
- Senior leaders including the governing body have ensured students' achievement is above average and the quality of teaching has improved.
- The sixth form is good. It is led and managed well, resulting in students making good progress and gaining above average A-level results.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and marking are not consistently good in all subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to meet students' abilities or needs.
- Not all middle managers monitor teachers' performance or check students' progress effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty four part lessons were observed by inspectors. Many of them alongside senior leaders. In addition, three lessons were visited for short periods of time with a specific focus on marking.
- The quality of marking was scrutinised.
- Meetings took place with students, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the diocese.
- Some students were heard read by inspectors.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies and safeguarding arrangements.
- By the end of the inspection visit, 51 responses to the on-line parent survey (Parent View), were collected and analysed. The school's analysis of its parental surveys was also taken into account.
- Inspectors analysed 42 questionnaires that were returned by staff.

Inspection team

John Seal, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Bowles

Additional Inspector

Raye Allison-Smith

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- No alternative provision is used by the school.
- Most of the students are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below the national average. In this group are those students who are eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- The proportion of students identified as being at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- There is boarding provision but it was not evaluated by this inspection.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teachers consistently match the best assessment practice in the school, particularly in drama and French by:
 - using their knowledge of students' starting points and prior learning to provide work that precisely matches their needs and capabilities
 - marking students' work regularly with high quality written comments and constructive verbal guidance and information about how to make the most progress
 - making sure that students have enough time to reflect and respond to questions.
- Ensure all middle leaders carry out their responsibilities for holding teachers to account by:
 - regularly monitoring the quality of teaching
 - checking students' progress against targets
 - reporting the outcomes of their actions to senior leaders including the governing body through the appropriately agreed processes and meetings schedule.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress from above average starting points. As a result, the proportion who achieve five A* to C GCSEs including English and mathematics is significantly above average.
- Early entry for GCSE examinations is not used.
- In the sixth form, students' progress has increased and is now good. Students make good progress in most lessons. This is particularly noticeable in English and mathematics where their literacy and numeracy skills and attainment are above average.
- Students' reading and writing skills are above average. These skills are taught well in most subjects. The very few students whose reading ages are below national expectations make good progress to catch up with their peers.
- The very small number of students who are identified as having disabilities and/or special educational needs make good progress.
- The attainment of the extremely small number of students eligible for free school meals is below that expected nationally, based on their average point scores, but their progress is increasing to narrow the attainment gap with their non-free school peers.
- Achievement is good and not outstanding because sixth form students' progress varies between some subjects. The academy's current assessment information indicates progress is accelerating and in some subjects for example English, attainment is above average.
- Lower levels of achievement are evident in a very small number of subjects, particularly at the higher grades, for example, French.

The quality of teaching is good

- In most lessons, students are clear about what is expected of them. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teachers have higher expectations of what students can achieve and set work that is mostly challenging and interesting. They use National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades as targets, providing students with helpful tips and information about how to achieve the highest level of attainment that they are capable of.
- During the inspection, teachers demonstrated skilful questioning to gauge students' understanding. This was particularly striking in the English, mathematics and science lessons that were observed.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables teachers to provide students with good information and ideas for further research.
- In the very best lessons seen, students and teachers discussed complex and challenging topics. For example, in English, sixth form lessons students tackled aspects of war and death in a mature and reflective manner.
- Students respond well to the opportunities for discussion and practical activities. They often work very productively together in pairs or groups.
- Teaching is good and not outstanding because there is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching across all subjects. In some lessons, teachers do not plan activities to match students' different levels of ability. Consequently, their progress slows down and the students become disengaged from their learning. An example of this was observed during a Year 11 French lesson.
- The quality of marking is not consistent across all subjects. Most students receive detailed written feedback about how to improve; whilst, in a small number of subjects, students' work receives only cursory and occasional ticks.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers direct what students must do for most of the time.

Consequently, there is little opportunity for students to practise the skills and confidence required to become less reliant on their teacher. On occasions, they are not provided with enough time to develop their thoughts. As a result, progress made during these lessons is more limited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school site is exemplary. Their attitudes to learning are extremely positive and students' respond well to requests and instructions from staff. Even in the few lessons that are uninteresting or lack challenge, students generally try to pay attention.
- There have been no permanent exclusions for over three years, and fixed term exclusions are very low and decreasing.
- Students' attendance is above average and their punctuality at the start of school and for lessons during the day is good.
- Students are polite and courteous to each other and show care and attention to health and safety aspects. They demonstrate a good awareness of what is safe and unsafe behaviour both physically and whilst online.
- Bullying is almost non-existent. Those students who spoke to inspectors felt that on the extremely rare occasions bullying occurred it would be dealt with promptly by the school.
- A small number of parents completed the on-line questionnaire. Of these, almost all were positive about behaviour and how it was managed by the school. The school regularly commissions an independent survey of parental views. In these larger surveys, the significant majority of parents' views support the findings of the inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy know the school well. Their dedication to improving the school can be seen in how well they know what it does well and where improvements need to be made.
- Most leaders and managers at different levels are clear about their responsibilities and what they need to do to make further improvements. They have a good view of how to ensure students are on track to achieve the best grades possible and work effectively with their colleagues to further improve the standards of teaching.
- Leadership and management are good and not outstanding because a small number of middle managers do not hold their teams to account for the quality of teaching or the progress students make. Senior leaders are aware of this and a range of professional training and more formal procedures are in place to bring about further improvement.
- Staff performance is regularly checked and tightly linked to appraisal by senior leaders. There is a range of professional development opportunities offered to staff through joint lesson observations, working alongside other colleagues to share good practice and regular staff briefings and in-house training.
- Most teachers adhere to the high standards outlined by senior leaders in a range of policies and procedures. Where informal training and coaching does not improve practice, formal procedures are carried out effectively.
- Although the boarding aspect of the school was not inspected at this time, there are strong links between boarding and education. Students talked very positively about how they were helped with homework during the evenings and prepared to start the school day with confidence.
- The sixth form is led and managed well. Students' transition from Key Stage 4 into further or higher education and training is highly successful. There are strong partnerships with local training providers and employers. Students told inspectors that they receive good information, advice and support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has taken on its responsibilities of leading and managing a stand-alone academy very seriously. As a result, the school's policies and procedures for managing people, finances and the safeguarding of children are robust and are externally audited and have positive outcomes. Senior leaders are effectively held to account and regularly asked challenging questions to check the school's performance. The good outcomes from the school's use of the pupil premium are kept under regular review.
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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	137313
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	403756

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

Type of school	Church of England Academy
School category	Voluntary aided
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	551
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Genton
Headteacher	Raymond McGovern
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2010
Telephone number	01749 813393
Fax number	01749 812870
Email address	enquiries@sexey.somerset.sch.uk

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