

Westfield Academy

Stiby Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 3EP

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While the quality of students’ learning is improving, they do not yet make good progress in all subjects. There is variation in achievement across subjects, with students performing much better in some areas than others.
- Not all teachers provide enough opportunities for students to talk about their progress and share their understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers’ marking does not always provide students with written feedback that helps them understand what they need to do to improve.
- In lessons where teachers do not use information on students’ achievement to plan learning, progress is not rapid enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is improving quickly and, as a result, more students are beginning to make good progress.
- Strong leadership from the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body and many faculty leaders has led to improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Students behave well and feel very safe. They understand the academy’s high expectations of their behaviour.
- Senior leaders are now using data on students’ achievement effectively. They have an accurate picture of the school’s strengths and weaknesses.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 30 lessons and made shorter visits to a number of sessions. Some observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with students, staff and governors.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They observed the school's work and considered responses to 32 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors considered the school's analysis of its examination performance in recent years and also information about the achievement of students currently in the school. They looked at a range of documentation and policies related to how the school evaluates its work as well as considering the school's improvement and development plans.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Chris King, Lead inspector | Additional inspector |
| Jane Blakey | Additional inspector |
| Christopher Allen | Additional inspector |
| Anne Barrett | Additional inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Westfield Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, Westfield Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from a White British background and a few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is above average. Many students join later than the normal start time in Year 7.
- A lower-than-average proportion of students are eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funds to support particular pupils, including looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The school works with a local college to provide alternative courses for a small group of students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - developing a greater emphasis in lessons on the dialogue between teachers and students, including ensuring that students understand how to improve.
 - improving the quality and consistency of written comments in students' books so that marking always helps them improve their work.
 - planning more opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning and to develop the skills to become more independent learners.
- Improve students' overall achievement by:
 - ensuring that students make the progress in all subjects at the same rates as they do in the very best areas.
 - strengthening further the effectiveness of leadership by making sure that the very best practices of faculty leaders are shared more widely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because students' progress, while improving, is not rapid enough. Students' progress is improving but not consistently across all subject areas. Too much variation exists between those subjects where students are doing well, such as science and dance, and other subjects such as modern foreign languages and art.
- Students currently in school are making more rapid progress, in almost all subjects and in all year groups, than in the past. This is as a direct result of the better teaching that is now becoming established, and students' much better attitudes to learning.
- Students enter the school with broadly average attainment. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and mathematics has improved over time. Students' work and the school's internal tracking demonstrate that this is broadly average.
- Some students were entered for GCSE examinations before they reached the end of Year 11. The school's approach to early examination entry did not limit students' success.
- Rates of progress in English and mathematics are improving quickly with strong performance in English supported well by the school's effective work to improve students' literacy skills.
- Little difference in the achievement of groups was seen in lessons. In particular, disabled students and those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported and were seen in lessons to be achieving in line with their peers.
- A small group of students access vocational courses that the school is unable to provide at the local college. Taking into account their starting points, students on these courses make good progress.
- Those students eligible for additional support through the pupil premium funding were seen to be making progress in line with other students. Extra funding has been used to provide support through mentoring, life skills and counselling for students as well as reducing class sizes. It has also been used to ensure that students have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular visits and activities. As a result, the average point scores of these students are becoming closer to their peers and gaps in achievement are closing.
- Detailed plans and actions are in place to help support students' literacy skills, with more opportunities being provided for students to develop their extended writing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection but is not consistently strong enough to be judged good overall. Students that had been in the school the longest had noticed the changes and appreciated the support their teachers gave them.
- Students make the best progress in lessons where there are frequent opportunities for students to develop their own understanding of how they can get better. Effective marking and written feedback allowed students in those lessons to make more rapid progress.
- Where teaching is best, teachers use assessment information on their students to plan learning precisely. They plan regular assessment opportunities and check students' understanding, which helps to develop students' independence and confidence in how to improve their work. In one science lesson, students were skilfully taken through a series of activities to develop and share their understanding of how to answer an excellent examination question. Those students were left with the confidence to know exactly how they needed to improve to get high marks.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers spend too much time directing the learning. As result, students become less engaged in the activities set and have far fewer opportunities to think for themselves. Consequently, they are less secure on how or what to do to improve their work. In such lessons, teachers do not typically make use of the information they have on students' abilities to plan for better progress.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are being supported well in classes and examples of effective work between teaching assistants and students were observed. In these lessons, work was adapted to meet students' needs and maximise their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in the behaviour and attitudes of students as a direct result of strong leadership in this area. Students that have been in the school the longest recognise that their school has changed and is now far more focused on learning and progress. In lessons, students respond quickly to their teachers' expectations of behaviour, and very positive relationships exist.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because students' attitudes to learning, particularly independent learning, are not yet consistently excellent.
- Individual students and different groups of students feel safe. Parents and carers agree with this and were very positive about the school.
- The school's attendance levels have consistently improved year on year and are line with national averages.
- At breaks and lunchtimes, students moved around the site safely and are well supported by highly visible staff. Students said that they were confident that any problems they had would be dealt with well by staff. Students are aware of how to keep themselves safe in many different circumstances, including the use of modern technology.
- The school is very successful in managing students whose behaviour can be poor. There are also successful strategies for managing the induction of the high numbers of students who join at various stages during the year. There are many case studies showing that these students settle quickly into school and benefit from support that meets their needs.
- The school has strong and effective systems to promote positive behaviour. The school's system for rewarding good behaviour by 'stamping' students' planners is effective, and students are very keen to take part and engage in their lessons as a result.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have worked successfully to bring about improvement. The weakest teaching has been eliminated and there are strong signs of improvement in the school's work. New teachers have joined the staff, bringing additional skills and the ability to improve the school further.
- Teaching is monitored effectively and the school has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses within different subject areas. Leaders are fully aware of the variability that exists and are now working well to bring about greater consistency in students' achievement.
- The leadership and development of teaching, along with the school's effective use of performance data, means that actions are well targeted. The overall quality of teaching is improving quickly. The school works with an external adviser to support this improvement.
- Leaders hold teachers to account at all levels and performance management has been used very effectively by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders in charge of subjects are keen to share each other's expertise but are not yet doing this enough to ensure that all subject leadership is consistently as strong as the best.
- Staff morale at the school is high. The headteacher and leaders are proud of their school and know that all those involved are keen for it to improve further. A collective shared vision was evident in the school's welcoming and ambitious approach.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and fully aware of their responsibilities

in relation to child protection and risk assessment.

- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. A good balance of academic and vocational courses is provided on the school site and in links with a local college. This helps to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is effectively promoted through a range of activities and across subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, in all areas, and work effectively with the headteacher and senior staff to improve the quality of teaching, and they are aware of how staff are rewarded, through pay progression, for meeting their targets. They understand the performance of the school well and share, with the headteacher, a common vision for continued improvement. Governors have, along with the headteacher, managed the school's budget well and its conversion to academy status. They are involved in discussions about the spending of the pupil premium and its impact. They have benefited, along with the whole school, from the support and evaluations of an external adviser.

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

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| Unique reference number | 137203 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 406661 |

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

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| Type of school | Academy converter |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 821 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Adam Dyer |
| Headteacher | Chris Hunt |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5–6 May 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01935 423747 |
| Fax number | 01935 411340 |
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