

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Watery Lane, Newent, GL18 1QF

Inspection dates 10–11 January 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures

- Students who started at the school with below-average attainment do not make enough progress. The school's aspirations for these students are not high enough. As a result, achievement is inadequate.
- Teaching is inadequate because it does not meet the needs of less able and disabled students or those with special educational needs. Teachers do not have a good enough understanding of the progress that students are expected to make during their time at the school. They do not know enough about how students of different abilities are achieving in their classes.
- Students are not given enough feedback either through marking in their books or through discussion with their teachers on how to make good progress.
- While most students behave well, in some lessons they lose concentration because the lessons are not interesting enough for them or do not meet their needs.
- Leaders at all levels do not identify weaknesses quickly enough, for example in the quality of teaching, so that they can be tackled urgently to ensure improvements are made.
- Governors have not made good enough checks on the progress of all groups of students and therefore do not know how well they are doing.

The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is good and students are making good progress.
- There are some areas of good and better teaching such as in the visual arts, design and technology, religious education and history.
- There are generally good relationships between the staff and students.
- Procedures to ensure the safety of students are good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 50 lessons and were accompanied by senior leaders for half the lesson observations.
- English examinations were taking place for Year 11 on the first day of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 69 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and two telephone calls from parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governors' meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding. They analysed the responses in 20 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work across the age range and ability groups.

Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional inspector
David King	Additional inspector
Pat O'Shea	Additional inspector
Robert Ridout	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

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre converted to academy status in September 2012. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2010, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of students who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- One fifth of Year 11 students follow courses for one day a week at Gloucester College and Hartpury College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by making sure that:
 - all teachers make good use of the information from their assessments to plan lessons which match students' needs and levels of ability so all can make good progress
 - students' work is marked regularly to inform and guide their development
 - lessons motivate and engage students so that their interest is maintained and behaviour is good
 - more opportunities are provided for students to work independently.
- Raise the achievement of students of all abilities, particularly the less able and those with special educational needs, so that they make consistently good progress by:
 - making sure that challenging targets are set for all students
 - developing and strengthening students' literacy skills across subjects
 - ensuring teachers fully understand the progress that students are expected to make during their time at the school
 - ensuring that systems for making checks on students' progress are understood and used consistently by all staff
 - ensuring that the progress achieved by students following college courses is good and sufficient for them to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leaders at all levels by:
 - ensuring that leaders, including governors and all staff, understand the difference between

- attainment and standards and achievement or progress and plan and set targets accordingly
 - developing an accurate understanding of the school's performance having analysed data on students' progress
 - ensuring that leaders with responsibility for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those on college courses understand and use information about attendance and behaviour and their progress, particularly in English and mathematics, to improve outcomes
 - ensuring that the school's improvement plans are sufficiently ambitious and that progress is reviewed regularly to determine the impact on students' outcomes
 - using evidence arising from the monitoring of teaching, marking and the feedback given to students to drive further improvement.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because less able students, disabled students and those with special educational needs make inadequate progress and are making significantly less progress than expected. Students make too little progress in mathematics and English because teachers have low expectations and do not give enough attention to the progress of these students.
- Students' attainment when they start at the school is usually above average. The achievement for average- and higher-attaining students, including those in receipt of pupil premium funding, across Key Stages 3 and 4 is broadly as expected. However, lower attaining students and those supported by the pupil premium are not making enough progress.
- Students in the sixth form, who enter with average or above-average attainment, make good progress because they follow suitable courses.
- There have been some efforts to improve students' literacy skills as these have been identified as a weakness. However, there is too much concentration on making sure that students understand examination questions rather than on their speaking, listening and reading skills in different subjects of the curriculum.
- Students' progress in subjects and across key stages is too variable. Although there is good practice in some subjects, for example, in art, design and technology and physical education, students say that they do not receive enough feedback about how to improve their work. Too often, their targets for improvement are not challenging enough and students are not expected to act on them.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because less able and disabled students and those with special educational needs are making inadequate progress.
- Teachers do not take good account of students' prior learning and use information from their assessments to set tasks which challenge all students and meet their different needs. In too many lessons, all students are set the same work. They do not have enough opportunity to talk about what they have learned. In too many lessons, teachers talk for a long time and students do not have the chance to actively engage in learning. As a result, many lose concentration.
- Teachers do not check students' learning and progress well or frequently. Too much teaching fails to provide feedback or show learners, especially the less able students, what they need to do to improve. Students have few opportunities to act on suggestions when they are given, or to work by themselves. Students say that while they know their targets, they want their work to be marked more often. Inspection evidence shows that some books had not been marked for over a month.
- Senior leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching are not sufficiently robust or successful. While some strategies, such as pairing a strong department with a weaker one and getting colleagues working together to improve their practice, have had some success, these actions are not established fully across the school. Training to promote better teaching has not had a strong enough focus on the progress to be made by all students.
- There is some good and better teaching, but not enough to ensure that all students make good progress. The good practice is not being shared widely enough. Strategies in marking to help students think about their learning, for example, 'this work would be even better if' and 'what went well' are not being used in most lessons.
- Technology is being used successfully in the visual arts and physical education lessons, where students use hand-held devices to assess what they have done. However, this is not consistent and senior leaders are not monitoring the impact of the use of technology.
- In a few lessons teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question students in order to reshape tasks to improve learning. In these lessons, students are expected to give full answers,

explain their thinking and respond to one another's ideas. As a result, they make good progress.

- The teaching in the sixth form is good. Teaching is characterised by a high level of challenge, students who are fully engaged in the lesson and the expectation of extended responses to teachers' questions.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed carefully enough to support students' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of students is good around the school. Students mix well together at break and lunch time. They say they feel safe and know who to turn to if a case of bullying arises. They understand different types of discrimination and bullying and what to do about them.
- Most students have positive attitudes to learning, behave well and are willing to learn. This is the case when teaching engages all students. However, in too many lessons students have to listen passively to teachers talking for too long and teaching does not actively engage all students. As a result, behaviour deteriorates in some groups, particularly where students are less able.
- Attendance is tracked and links with the education welfare officer have helped to reduce the number of persistent absentees. Although attendance has improved in the school's first term it remains lower than average for students eligible for the pupil premium and for those with special educational needs. Punctuality to lessons is not consistently good and there were a number of lessons where inspectors observed students arriving late.
- There is good communication with alternative providers about the attendance and behaviour of students who follow college courses.
- Most parents who expressed their views agree that students are well cared for. However, a small number of parents expressed concerns about behaviour and one parent raised concerns that the school took too long to respond to her request for a meeting to discuss her daughter's progress.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Senior leaders with specific areas of responsibility do not have a good understanding of the information regarding students' achievement. They are unclear as to the distinction between attainment or standards and achievement or progress. The school has not regarded the low achievement of less-able students as a priority. Consequently, these students do not make the progress they should.
- The management of teachers' performance is not tightly related to rates of progress for all students and senior leaders are not tackling the weaknesses in teaching sufficiently well. Leaders know where the best teaching is to be found, but good practice is not shared across the school. For example, steps have not been taken to make sure that all teachers use approaches which meet the needs of all learners.
- Training to improve the quality of marking and feedback to students has not had a beneficial impact in most lessons.
- Plans for driving improvement in subjects and for individual staff are not ambitious enough. Too often, the focus is on students achieving a GCSE grade C or better, with little reference to the expected attainment and progress of less-able and disabled students, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The way the additional funds provided through the pupils premium are spent is not having a positive impact on outcomes for the students that it is intended to support.
- Leaders responsible for students with special educational needs and those who follow college-based courses make checks on their behaviour and attendance and provide good pastoral care. However, they do not have good information about how well these students are doing and are not held to account for their progress.
- The wider curriculum provides additional opportunities for students in sport, the visual arts, drama and trips abroad.

- The school provides good opportunities for promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors saw examples of students cooperating well and there was evidence of discussions of moral issues in history and religious education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although supportive and committed to the school, the governing body is not effective in challenging the school about the progress of all groups of students, including those who receive pupil premium funding. Training on data is to be provided for governors as they do not currently have a secure understanding of data about examination results and information about schools nationally. This means they are not able to hold the school to account for the impact of actions taken and the standards achieved by different groups. They do not have a secure picture of the quality of teaching or how performance management and rewards for teaching are linked to pay. The governing body undertakes its statutory duties and ensures that all aspects of safeguarding are met.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

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	138746
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	409424

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non 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	1,236
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Stephen Huckvale
Headteacher	Jane Steele
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01531 820550
Fax number	01531 820707
Email address	admin@newent.gloucs.sch.uk

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