

# Chiltern Hills Academy

Chartridge Lane, Chesham, HP5 2RG

## Inspection dates

27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	<b>Not previously inspected</b>	
	This inspection:		
		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Students achieve well. Although below average, GCSE results are improving rapidly year on year and students make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are observed regularly by leaders and there is good provision for in-school training so that teachers can continue to improve their skills.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress because of good or better teaching.
- Students behave well and feel very safe. They have a good understanding of the academy's high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to others.
- The governing body provides outstanding governance of the academy and, through careful review of all activities, ensures there is an excellent balance of challenge and support.
- The Principal and senior leaders provide very effective leadership which has contributed well to the improvements brought about over the last two years.
- The good curriculum meets the different needs of students very well.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and ensures that students develop well into informed and reflective young people.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to raise achievement higher. Not enough opportunities are provided for more able students to attain the highest grades.
- The quality of leadership is inconsistent at subject level in the school and this means the pace of improvement overall is not as rapid as it could be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons, of which five were joint observations with a member of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the Chair, and with senior and middle leaders as well as with three groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at key documents including the school’s plans for improvement, the minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school’s own data on students’ progress, records relating to self-evaluation, behaviour and attendance, policies and procedures for safeguarding and samples of students’ work during lesson observations.

## Inspection team

Peter Limm, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Elizabeth Bull	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Chiltern Hills Academy is smaller than the average secondary school and serves the small town of Chesham. It became an academy on 1 September 2011 and specialises in performing arts and design.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds but the proportion from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is high, but very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportions of students supported at school action and school action plus or with a statement of special education needs are below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for students known to be entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and children of service families, is broadly the same as that found nationally.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students attend two external providers for vocational courses.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in those subjects where academy procedures and policies are not yet fully embedded and the rate of progress in students' achievement is lower than for other subjects.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - provide appropriately challenging and stretching work for the more able students so that more of them achieve the highest grades
  - ensure that marking consistently indicates what students have to do to improve their work and that students act upon the guidance given
  - check more regularly during lessons that students know what to do and can demonstrate their understanding clearly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with standards that are below the national average. The proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is below average but rising markedly. However, the proportion of students gaining the highest grades, though improving, is still below average.
- Detailed information provided by the academy provided firm evidence that students make good progress in most subjects, including mathematics and English. In lessons observed during the inspection, students' achievement was almost always good and sometimes outstanding.
- Almost all students are entered early for the mathematics GCSE examination. Care is taken to make sure that students are not disadvantaged by this and they can take the examination again in the summer if necessary to gain higher grades.
- In the sixth form, students' progress is good overall and where results are not as good as they should be, performance is improving.
- Students read well. Those with weaker skills in reading are supported effectively, and they gain quickly the skills they need. Different subjects make a good contribution to promoting literacy skills in the school. Students' progress in English by the end of Year 11 compares favourably with national figures.
- The academy monitors the progress of individuals rigorously. Effective use is made of additional funding received through the pupil premium for those students who have been identified as requiring extra support, particularly those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The average points scores for these students in English and mathematics are below those of other students, but are improving rapidly.
- Teachers provide good support to disabled students and those who have special educational needs. By the end of Year 11, the progress of this group of students is in line with that of their classmates.
- Students from minority ethnic groups do well and their progress is at least as good as that of other students in the academy.
- More able students are sometimes not given work that stretches them enough to achieve the highest grades.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some lessons are outstanding, a picture which confirms the academy's own view of teaching over time. There is a good range of support and training for teachers within the academy and good teaching is found across all subjects.
- Good teaching engages students fully in their learning. Teachers in these lessons ensure that students understand what they have to do and regularly check their understanding during lessons. Individual students who find work difficult are supported well by teaching assistants to rectify mistakes and to keep pace with other students.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to challenge the more able students effectively and this slows the rate of progress they make. Not all teachers check regularly enough during lessons that students are developing their understanding of key concepts and skills.
- Students have a number of good opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills and the academy is making sure that new literacy and numeracy policies are embedded effectively.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. The small teaching groups foster good relationships in lessons and teachers are able to support individual students well.
- Marking in most subjects is thorough, but this is not always the case and sometimes teachers do not check regularly enough to see that students are making the improvements they have been

asked to make. Some marking lacks sufficient guidance to help students improve their work further.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students have positive attitudes towards learning and respond well to the academy's behaviour management procedures. Good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development encourages good behaviour around the school and in other school activities. Students are proud of their new academy and look forward to being in the new buildings after September.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because a small minority of students are sometimes easily distracted from their work when the pace of teaching slows.
- Students say they feel safe in school and if they have a problem, they know whom to turn to for help and guidance.
- Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and say that the new ethos of the academy makes them very aware of the hurtful nature of racist or homophobic language. The academy strives to encourage all students to reflect deeply about the diverse nature of its community and how to behave in a humane way to one another. This explains why students from different religious and cultural backgrounds get on well together.
- Attendance has improved since the academy was formed and is now broadly average.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The strong leadership of the Principal is one of the main reasons for the academy's growing success and its improving profile locally.
- The Principal has been well supported by the senior team and most middle leaders. This strong leadership has clearly contributed to the improvements made in the past two years. However, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of leadership within some subjects and this means the academy's good procedures and policies have not been embedded quite so well in all areas.
- There has been a key focus on making everyone accountable for their performance and this has led to the improvements in teaching and achievement which have been marks of the academy's good progress. The quality of teaching and the tracking of students' progress are monitored regularly and with increasing rigour and both are now linked closely to teachers' performance management and pay increases.
- Leaders have an incisive and accurate view of the quality of teaching and the areas for further development. In particular, there is a good in-school professional development programme which encourages teachers to share ideas and improve their professional practice.
- The academy's emphasis on equality of opportunity is demonstrated well by the care it takes to make sure that students make good progress. The pupil premium funding is well planned and managed so that the students who require extra support keep pace with their peers in their learning.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides a coherent set of courses for students of different aspirations and abilities. The good links with partners ensure that students who follow vocational courses have clear routes for progression to further study, training or work. The few students who attend off-site provision also achieve and behave well.
- Good leadership and management of the academy's provision for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development mean that students have a range of opportunities to think and

reflect about personal values and how to enhance links with the community, especially through performing arts events.

- All statutory safeguarding procedures are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides outstanding governance to help shape and guide the academy's work and development. The Principal and senior leaders are held robustly to account for all aspects of the academy's performance. Difficult decisions have also had to be made about the effectiveness of some teachers, but governors have not flinched from this task and hence have contributed very well to the academy's improving profile in the community. Governors have an excellent grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. They rigorously question any data provided by leaders and they evaluate this information against the academy's key priorities for improvement. Governors use their wide range of skills well to make sure that staff promotion within the academy is tied closely to performance and improving results. Governors know how pupil premium funding is allocated to enable those students who require extra support to make good progress. The new building programme was planned for very carefully by the governing body and the main sponsor and this care and good oversight are bearing fruit as impressive new buildings come into use on a well-phased basis.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137280
<b>Local authority</b>	Non maintained
<b>Inspection number</b>	399847

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	648
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Brown
<b>Principal</b>	Kevin Patrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 782066
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