

# Fort Hill Community School

Kenilworth Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG23 8JQ

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement is not yet good. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics is above the government's floor target. However, the numbers making the progress expected of them is below national averages.
- Standards do not exceed national averages in art, music or French and are not high enough humanities.
- There is too much variation in achievement between different groups of students. Many students who do not benefit from additional help do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teaching is improving but is not yet resulting in consistently good progress for all groups of students and across all subjects.
- Not all teachers have high expectations of students, or ensure they produce good work.
- Alternative education arrangements do not make enough difference to improving the achievement or attendance of students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.
- Leaders and managers have systems and approaches in place that are improving teaching and raising achievement. However, many of these initiatives have been put in place recently and this work has yet to result in good achievement for all students.
- Leaders and managers have yet to take all the steps needed to ensure all students do as well as they should do.
- The governing body does not challenge the school with enough rigour. They are not clear how extra funding provided by the government for particular groups of students is impacting.

### The school has the following strengths

- Overall, the number of exclusions has fallen and attendance has improved.
- Students are well mannered and the school is a safe place for them to work and socialise in.
- The school works well to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs in lessons and activities.
- The appointment of good teachers and senior leaders has increased the school's capacity to make further improvements.
- Training and regular observations of lessons are improving teaching and students' progress.
- Leaders have developed good systems to track students' progress through the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons, of which nine were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition they made a number of shorter visits to year assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the school leadership and management and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with three groups of students representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally during social time.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's own checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 46 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received and discussed with parents and carers.

## Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Matthews

Additional Inspector

Carolyn Steer

Additional Inspector

Anne Wright

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Fort Hill Community School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Almost 94% of the students are from White British, Irish or other White or mixed White background. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is average when compared with the national figures. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also in line with the national average.
- The government provides in this school additional funding called the pupil premium to support children in care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children of parents in the armed forces. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- Around 10% of the students are disabled or have special educational needs. The proportion of students supported by school action is below average, but the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above national averages.
- A very small number of students from Year 10 and 11 access alternative programmes at Basingstoke College.
- The school has a specialist unit on site supporting young people with dyslexia on site.
- It is a member of both its local primary partnership and local school cluster group.
- The school exceeds current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve achievement and ensure that all students make good progress by accelerating the improvements to the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - raising expectations of what students can do
  - making better use of data to plan to meet the needs of students of different abilities
  - providing each individual student with work at the right level of difficulty and presenting the most-able students with enough challenge.
  - ensuring that learning moves at a brisk pace in all lessons
  - ensuring that all teachers can analyse and evaluate the data for all students to provide appropriate interventions.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that leaders at all levels consistently and robustly analyse and evaluate the impact of their work in terms of students' achievement and expected progress.
- Ensuring that the governing body acts upon the recommendations of the review of governance so it better holds the school to account. Governors need to increase their awareness of the impact of the school's work on the progress of all groups of students, pupil premium spending and the link between staff pay and student progress arising from performance management.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In most years students arrive at the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly average. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 4 their results across a wide range of subjects remains average.
- Since the previous inspection the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has generally risen year on year. The proportion making expected progress has also increased but is still not high enough.
- In 2012, results for mathematics fell a little below average but those for English fell significantly and were well below the national average. School leaders and governors are well aware of the reasons for this and have taken swift action to improve performance. Lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work confirm the school's own tracking data that the decline has been stopped and standards are rising again for current students. The majority of students seen in lessons are making at least expected progress or better.
- Since September the school has been tracking students very carefully to ensure that they make expected progress or better and reach their target grades at the end of Key Stage 4. There is now strong evidence that higher numbers of current Year 11 students are set to make better than expected progress in both English and mathematics.
- In some subjects, such as design technology and modern foreign languages, students make better progress and their attainment is closer to the national average.
- In some other subjects, progress is not rapid enough because students are not set work at the right level of difficulty. In many lessons, all students are given the same task regardless of their different ability levels. The most-able students are often set work that is not demanding enough for them. In English, science and humanities, very few students attain the highest grades.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make expected progress and are well supported by personal action plans and additional support. However, the results for 2012 indicate that the progress of students with different abilities and of different backgrounds was too variable and progress was not good enough, particularly for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The performance in English and mathematics of students supported through pupil premium compared to all other pupils in the school has narrowed but remains significantly below the national average.
- The school has used its additional funding through the pupil premium to provide adult support in literacy and numeracy for eligible students. It has also been used to fund revision groups, including some during school holidays, as well as visits to places of interest. The progress of these students is improving and the gap with other students in each of English and mathematics is steadily closing as a result of the school's work.
- The very small numbers of students supported off-site in alternative provision achieve the same as other students in the school.
- Some students are entered early for some examinations. This is not always successful and where they do not do as well as they are able to do, they take the examination again in the following year.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- During recent months the school has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and as a result the quality of teaching is improving but there is still some variability in its quality. It is not good enough to make sure that all pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Relationships between students and staff are very good. Students appreciate the help and

support they get from their teachers.

- Most teachers have a secure knowledge and some convey their enthusiasm for their subjects which helps to motivate students. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and create a positive climate for learning where students are keen to be successful and, as a result, engage well with their learning.
- Students' progress in lessons depends on the quality of teaching. Teachers do not consistently make sure that the lessons they plan challenge and motivate all students to produce their best work. Some work is not hard enough and students are not always expected to try hard, so their progress slows. Some teachers do not pay enough attention to what students are doing in lessons and therefore do not change the teaching to match their needs so they only make the progress expected of them.
- In the best lessons, tasks and activities engage and motivate students. There is a good balance of individual work and group work. Resources, such as video clips, are used well to explain and reinforce learning, and teachers asked probing questions to encourage students to develop their thinking skills. Students work hard and are able to explain clearly what they are learning and what they need to do in order to improve. In such lessons, the pace of learning is rapid and students make progress that is at least good.
- Marking of work is not consistently good. In too many instances, marking is too brief and does not explain to students how they have made their mistakes or what they need to do to improve. Corrections are not always checked, poor presentation is not always challenged and, although spelling errors are highlighted, students are not always shown how to spell words correctly.
- There is more good teaching in the school than in the past. New teachers joining the school, training to help existing staff improve their teaching and regular lesson observations by senior staff have increased the amount of good teaching. In these lessons teachers are well organised and capture their students' interests and challenge them to do their best.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Students are generally polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Their behaviour is orderly in and around the school site and they are well mannered and good humoured.
- Senior leaders and teachers feel that learning behaviour require improvement. Inspectors and parents agree. The best behaviours in lessons results from high quality teaching where there are plenty of opportunities for students to find out things for themselves in a supportive but challenging environment. When teaching fails to motivate students, some of them sit back and let others answer questions and a very small minority of them misbehave.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Adults give good quality support to students. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with dyslexia, receive good support from staff and this helps them to be fully involved in school life.
- Students have a good awareness of how to stay safe and are aware of the issues associated with safety on the internet. They say that bullying is not a real issue in the school and are confident that staff would deal with any such incidents quickly and effectively. Parents and staff agree that the school is a safe place. The number of exclusions for poor behaviours have reduced significantly, but it remains higher than average.
- Attendance has risen and is much closer to the national average. The school has well established systems for dealing with persistent absence.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Since the previous inspection, school's leaders and the governing body have not yet secured the necessary improvements to raise achievement and the quality of teaching to good. Significant changes have been made to the way the school operates and there is evidence that learning is improving but still too few students make the progress expected of them.

- The school's results in 2012 were below expectations. The school has analysed carefully the reasons for this dip and have taken robust action, particularly to improve teaching and raise expectations.
- The work of the headteacher, supported by the senior team, is having a positive effect on the effective running of the school. A more sharply focused programme of checks on how well it is doing is in place. However to raise standards rapidly a more analytical and evaluative approach is required.
- Staff formally assess students' progress four times per year and this is discussed at leadership level between senior and team leaders. However, existing subject leaders are not reviewing the improvements comparing levels of student progress to their starting points frequently enough. As a result underachievement is not identified at an early point.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders of the school are gradually increasing the proportion of good or better teaching through improved monitoring and continued professional development. However, leaders are not holding teachers sufficiently to account for the quality of planning to make sure that teachers plan to meet the needs of all students.
- The performance management system is well organised. Training activities are tailored to meet the needs of individual staff. All teachers have their targets linked to the quality of teaching and examination results to increase their individual responsibility for improving students' learning. However, targets are not specific enough to help teachers measure the levels of students' progress as compared to their starting points.
- The curriculum which is broad and balanced enables students to study a wide range of courses and gain qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4 that enable them to successfully progress to the next steps in their learning.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequately promoted. Assemblies provide opportunities for students to reflect on a range of issues and a range of lessons and planned activities throughout the year focus effectively on cultural education.
- Arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure students behave and are safe when attending off-site provision.
- The local authority has provided support to the school, including coaching for staff and training aimed at developing the skills of leaders to evaluate more effectively and accurately. Teaching is better, standards are higher and the proportion of students making expected progress in English and mathematics is closer to the national averages. The school leadership know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have put in place plans to secure further rapid improvements. Senior leaders and governors oversee these plans, but responsibility for raising the achievement of groups of students known to be doing less well than others is less clear.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Chair of Governors has a realistic view of the school's effectiveness, based on his knowledge and understanding of its current performance. Governors ask many of the right questions, including about student progress and attainment for subjects, and hold school leaders to account against their core duties. The governing body of the school has fully supported the headteacher in taking decisive action to tackle inadequate teaching and leadership to raise standards within the school. Following an external audit of governance, the governing body recognises that not all its members have the expertise to be able to challenge school leaders and identifies how they may improve their effectiveness. While governors have received training about how to read and interpret examination data, they have not fully realised the significance of some aspects of the data. Detailed reports from the headteacher and senior staff, including those about teachers' performance, have been received and accepted without sufficient challenge. Governors must have a clearer idea of the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of the relevant students, understand how the school is improving the achievement of all groups of students and ensure that there is a clear link between pay and staff performance.

## 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>	116444
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405648

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	671
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Ham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Lawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256354311
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