

The Isle of Sheppey Academy

East Site Minster Road, Minster-on-Sea, ME12 3JQ

Inspection dates 14 – 15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Although students now make better progress during their time at the academy, further improvement is needed, especially for students who enter the academy in Year 7 with above average attainment.
- While two thirds of teaching is good, not all teachers make sure that students are keen to learn, join in and work hard in lessons.
- Marking does not make it clear to each student whether they are doing as well as they can and how they can improve.
- Too many students do not attend regularly. Parents are not involved enough in making sure their children come to school.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Courses are now more appropriate and students make expected progress, but too many do not attend regularly.
- Senior leadership is too cumbersome. As a result, accountability is unclear and the rate of improvement is slower than it could be.

The school has the following strengths

- Results have improved in the academy over the past three years. Students choose well from a wide variety of courses and make expected progress.
- Students who are looked after by the local authority or who have statements of special educational needs do well compared to similar students nationally.
- The students are proud of their new buildings. They understand and carry out the rules for uniform and behaviour around the school.
- New senior leaders, appointed by the Principal, have made a considerable difference to achievement, teaching, the range of subjects on offer, and students' behaviour, including for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Governors provide strong direction to the academy. They are open and frank with leaders and have clear plans for the future of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 part-lessons, taught by 49 teachers. Ten lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors also made short visits to English and mathematics lessons to look at the marking in students' books.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of students, governors and a local adviser.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the academy's documents on self-evaluation and safeguarding. In addition, the inspection team examined the academy's data on how well students are doing, records relating to behaviour and attendance, parent questionnaires and documents used by the leaders to monitor and evaluate the academy's work.
- Inspectors considered 75 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Anne Pepper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Jarvis	Additional Inspector
Matthew Portal	Additional Inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional Inspector
David Westworth	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires a notice to improve.

Information about this school

- The Isle of Sheppey Academy is a much larger than average-sized secondary school. It has a small sixth form.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is above average. This additional funding is given to schools for children in local authority care, children whose parents are in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals. A small number of students in each year group are in the care of the local authority.
- The academy uses its own alternative provision provided by the governors of the academy on another site.
- The Isle of Sheppey became a sponsor-led academy on 1 September 2009. The lead sponsor is Dulwich College, with Kent County Council and the Diocese of Canterbury as co-sponsors. The academy has a board of members, a trust and a governing body responsible for governance.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- New buildings opened on both the East and West sites on 27 February 2013. The old buildings are currently being demolished.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is all good or better by:
 - making sure all lessons interest and motivate students, especially those in Key Stage 3 and higher attaining students, to work hard and achieve well
 - marking students' work so that every student knows how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve attendance, including in the sixth form, so that it is above the national average in all year groups by:
 - using the data the academy collects to focus actions and show impact more quickly
 - raising the level at which rewards are given to students for good attendance.
- Increase the impact of school leadership in accelerating the rate of improvement by:
 - engaging parents and the local community in raising the aspiration of students and improving their attendance
 - ensuring that senior leadership is not too cumbersome so that accountability is clear.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students enter the academy on average about one year behind their peers nationally. Across their best eight subjects for all qualifications, students make expected progress. However, students who enter the academy with above average attainment in Year 7, make less progress than similar students nationally. There is little difference in the achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds.
- The percentage of students in Year 11 gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics improved in both 2011 and 2012 but, at 41%, it is still well below the national average of 58%. The academy's robust data shows that current Year 11 students are making faster progress, and inspection evidence suggests that the trend of improvement will continue.
- All students are entered early for GCSE English language and mathematics. In 2012, too few students went on to achieve higher grades. The academy has changed its entry policy so that in 2013 all those with the potential to attain higher grades will have the opportunity to re-sit these examinations.
- Those students who entered the academy with below average attainment in Year 7, including some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make better progress than similar pupils nationally, especially in English. The academy has a 'catch up' programme in Years 7 and 8 which is well matched to students' needs.
- Literacy has been strengthened through 'catch up' in Years 7 and 8 and, in the upper school, careful use of different GCSE English courses to suit the different needs of students. Reading is promoted well across the school but opportunities to develop spelling and grammar in writing are frequently missed.
- The attainment of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium was about three quarters of a GCSE grade in English below that of other students in the academy in 2012, the same as in 2011. The difference in mathematics narrowed from one grade in 2011 to half a grade in 2012. Pupils looked after by the local authority make much better progress than similar pupils nationally.
- Progress in the sixth form requires improvement. Students achieve particularly well in art and law at AS and A level. Students make expected progress over two years in vocational and A level subjects. However, students do not make good progress in the first year as they do not attend often enough.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some teachers do not expect enough of students at Key Stage 3, particularly students who enter Year 7 with above average attainment. The work in some students' books is often untidy and they do not do enough work.
- Marking is variable. In general teachers are working hard to mark books, following the academy's guidelines. However, teachers are not setting out clearly enough how well students are currently doing or what they need to do to improve.

- Checks carried out by the academy shows that about two thirds of teaching is good, and this is supported by inspection evidence. Teaching is better in Key Stage 4, as teachers know the requirements of the examination course well. For example in a Year 10 English lesson, students were learning a technique for writing paragraphs to improve a piece of examination work. The teaching of mathematics and science, in particular, requires further improvement.
- Teaching in English has improved and good teaching can be found across a range of subjects. An example of outstanding teaching was seen in a Year 13 physical education lesson with clear tasks, strong pace and high quality questions. Not a moment was wasted, students' understanding was extended and their progress considerably enhanced.
- Teachers have welcomed the opportunities to adapt their teaching styles in the new buildings, using in both traditional classrooms and open-plan spaces. For example, three Year 9 mathematics classes worked together on the laws of indices. The teachers had planned together and led different parts of the lesson. The students used common information but were able to work successfully at different levels.
- In less effective lessons, teachers had not adapted as well to the opportunities the building provides. In attempting to minimise speaking because of the distraction it caused to other groups, they became over-reliant on displays and worksheets as a focus for learning. This resulted in many students working at a slower pace.
- Teaching in individual lessons in the sixth form is good but progress is limited by students' poor attendance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Attendance has improved, but the rate of improvement is not fast enough. Sixth form attendance is too low, despite new arrangements for registration. Rewards are given for good attendance and support staff are quick to follow up non-attendance. However, the actions being taken are not yet resulting in above average levels of attendance because parents are not sufficiently involved in ensuring their children attend regularly.
 - Behaviour around the academy is generally good. Students and staff were positive about the improvements arising from clearer expectations being set for uniform and for conduct in and around the site. However, a few students do not take responsibility for their own behaviour, for example chewing gum or eating on the stairways.
 - Behaviour in lessons is linked to the quality of teaching. When teaching is strong, there is a clear focus on the learning that is planned and time is used well. In weaker lessons, teachers do not ensure that students work hard enough; some quietly do little work and others lose concentration.
 - Exclusions have fallen considerably over recent years but are still too high. The academy makes suitable provision for students who are not attending normal lessons, both on the academy site and off-site. Senior leaders monitor these students to ensure they attend well, are kept safe and behave well. Their attainment is similar although slightly below their peers in the academy.
 - Students feel safe. Students understand how to prevent bullying, and know about the different forms it may take. They say it is dealt with fairly and is not an issue in the academy. Parents are more concerned, as shown by the responses to Parent View and questionnaires completed
-

during parents' evenings. Inspectors consider that behaviour has improved and that better engagement with parents is a key action for the academy.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The academy has improved over the last three years but the pace of improvement is not as fast as it could be. New senior leaders, appointed by the Principal, have brought more urgency to improving outcomes, as shown by the higher achievement of current students, the wider range of subjects on offer, better teaching and behaviour. However, some senior leaders are not held to account sharply enough, to make sure they are contributing to rapid improvement.
- The programmes in place to improve teaching are effective. Teachers know how good their teaching is and what they need to do to improve. Ten joint observations were carried during the inspection; senior leaders are able to accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of teaching as shown by the progress students make in a particular lesson and over time.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is strength of the school. Students have a wide choice of academic and vocational choices with clear 'Grammar', 'Academic' and 'Vocational' pathways starting in Year 8. Subsequent course choices in Years 9 and 10 ensure that students are on the right courses. This leads to the strong overall progress being made by students across their best eight subjects.
- The sixth form has improved its provision. New courses in motor vehicle, construction and hair and beauty and better guidance for students means that courses are better matched to their needs. Progress to A level over two years is in line with national figures. However, the sixth form still requires improvement as progress after one year to AS level is weaker because lessons are not meeting students' needs well enough. Current students are doing well in lessons.
- The academy's self-evaluation identifies strengths and weakness clearly but does not prioritise the actions that will have most impact. Academy plans are generally focused and specific but it is not always clear who is accountable for their success. Good use has been made of external advice and support, for example in mathematics and for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result of very specific planning with clear targets, current progress has improved in these important areas.
- Social and moral aspects of students' development are much more clearly evident than spiritual or cultural aspects. In particular there are insufficient links with parents, the local and wider communities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is robustly and very effectively led. Governors have clear view of how well the academy is doing. They are well informed about the overall quality of teaching and the outcomes of plans to support some staff. They understand the importance of performance management and check decisions on pay progression. Governors have evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the academy's sponsorship and have taken action accordingly. They manage finances, as shown by the new buildings and their analysis of the impact of pupil premium funding. However, they have not ensured that senior leaders, at all levels, are held sharply to account for the rate of improvement within their area of responsibility because the leadership structure is too cumbersome. They understand data on the performance of the academy and use it to compare with others locally and nationally.

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	135721
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	399735

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
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	1941
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ralph Mainard
Principal	David Day
Date of previous school inspection	1-2 December 2011
Telephone number	01795 873591
Fax number	N/A
Email address	office@iosa.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

