

# Clacton County High School

Walton Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 6DZ

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress because teaching is good.
- Pupils enjoy school because learning is interesting.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They say bullying does not happen often and that it is dealt with well.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He works closely with other leaders and governors to raise standards and improve the progress made by pupils.
- Leaders provide good training to improve teaching.
- The sixth form is good. The students make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes work is undemanding or not taught at a fast enough pace.
- Occasionally, pupils are not clear about the main things they should be learning, so they are not sure about how well they make progress.
- Sometimes pupils' handwriting is careless and untidy.
- Teachers, most noticeably in science, do not always mark pupils' work often enough, tell pupils how well they are making progress, what the next steps in learning are, how they could do better, or make sure that they follow the advice teachers give them.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 55 teachers in 59 lessons or parts of lessons. Ten of these were observed jointly with senior leaders to check how accurately they evaluate teaching. Inspectors also listened to younger pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and with members of the governing body and a representative of the North East Essex Education Partnership (NEEEP) academy group.
- Inspectors examined documents about the school’s work, including information about the achievement of pupils, development planning and the school’s self-evaluation.
- They took account of the 67 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, and the school’s own survey of parents’ and carers’ views.

## Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Isobel Randall	Additional Inspector
Simon Hughes	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector
Ann Short	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools.
- Pupils come from mainly White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average, and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A small number of students receive part of their education off site. This is at The Applied Learning Centre and it provides students with basic skills and opportunities for work experience.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school became an academy on 1 April 2012. The predecessor school, Clacton County High School, was judged to be satisfactory when it was last inspected in February 2011.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by making sure that:
  - work is demanding for all pupils, and the pace of lessons is fast
  - information about what is taught is clear so that pupils know how well they make progress
  - pupils' written work is neat and well presented
  - especially in science, teachers mark pupils' work frequently, tell pupils how well they are doing and what the next steps in learning are, tell them how to improve their work, and check that pupils follow the advice they are given.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 11, and are rising. GCSE results were broadly average in 2012, and have improved since the school became an academy. This represents pupils making good progress from well below-average attainment on entry to the school in Year 7. Progress is improving throughout the school.
- The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at A\* to C grades is rising. In humanities, where results were low in 2012, standards are improving. Past underachievement in mathematics has been dealt with effectively.
- Pupils have good reading skills, and lower ability pupils use methods that link sounds and letters to help them read effectively. Most pupils explain their ideas and understanding clearly, and use the vocabulary and terminology they use in lessons well. Their writing is mostly good, although some pupils' handwriting is occasionally careless and untidy.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are broadly average. They practise them in several subjects so they are confident in carrying out calculations, and in producing and using graphs and tables.
- Some pupils take their mathematics GCSE examinations early, and those who achieve the highest grades go on to more advanced courses. This prepares them well for mathematics in the sixth form. Pupils who do not do so well, continue with their mathematics studies and take the examination again at the end of Year 11.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported and are encouraged to work independently and with other pupils. In this way, they gain confidence in their own abilities to do well.
- Pupils starting in Year 7 with the poorest English and mathematics skills are well supported through 'catch-up' funding, and most make fast progress. The school provides individual and small-group work in English and mathematics for pupils with the poorest skills until they are ready to rejoin their classmates.
- Pupils who are educated off site make good progress in the vocational and basic skills courses they follow.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress. Funding is used effectively to provide staff for individual and small-group support, and for activities to encourage these pupils' interest in school. The standards they reached in 2012 were lower than the standards reached by other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics, and represented being about two years behind them. However, they did better than similar pupils nationally, and the gap between them and other pupils in the school has narrowed further in the current year.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress from below-average starting points. They did best in applied GCE courses and BTEC in 2012 and continue to make good progress in the current year. In A level and AS level courses, students' attainment is broadly average and their progress is good. Progress in A and AS courses, and the standards reached, are improving because of improved guidance on choosing the most appropriate courses. This has led to a significant increase in the stay-on rate from AS to A level.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is usually challenging, fast paced and based on accurate assessment of what pupils' individual learning needs are. There are frequently activities that help the least able pupils make good progress and extension tasks to make sure the most able pupils do as well as they can.
- Lessons are interesting and well planned to keep pupils' attention, and to engage them in activities that help them learn for themselves. Teachers often organise pupils to work in small groups, to discuss their ideas, listen to each other and to explain their understanding. This helps pupils to learn new work thoroughly, and promotes their moral, social and cultural development well.
- Teachers' questioning is searching. If pupils' answers are not detailed enough, the teacher challenges them or engages other pupils in discussion, with a clear expectation that they will give detailed, accurate explanations or descriptions.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to speak and write in most subjects, and to use their mathematical skills. In this way, pupils' confidence and success in English and mathematics is promoted effectively.
- Classroom assistants work well with teachers. They use effective approaches that encourage pupils to work independently, and to learn for themselves rather than be dependent on adults.
- The range of subjects taught is wide and meets the academic, vocational and personal interests of all pupils. Off-site activities are well organised to support pupils who might otherwise lose interest in school because it focuses on helping to equip them for finding work when they leave school.
- Teachers' marking is often good, telling pupils exactly how well they are making progress, what the next steps in learning are and what they need to do to improve their work. In the best instances, teachers check that pupils follow the advice they give. However, this approach is not applied across all subjects, and is least consistent in science.
- In most lessons, teachers explain to pupils what the main learning points are, and this leads to good learning and progress. However, occasionally, teachers are not clear enough about the main learning points, and pupils are not sure about how well they are doing.
- On a few occasions, work is not quite as demanding as it could be, or the pace is too slow, and then pupils' learning is too slow.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good, and often excellent, and is helping the fast improvement in the progress made by students. Students' particular needs are identified and addressed quickly. For example, the school has identified that some students find the mathematics needed in other subjects difficult, so it is providing support for them. The range of subjects offered is good, and the planning and guidance to ensure that students choose the right courses for their future ambitions has improved.

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

- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are good, and frequently outstanding. Pupils are keen to learn and, with little direction, work industriously and enthusiastically in most lessons.
- Relationships are very good. Pupils treat each other with respect and considerable kindness. They work together well in lessons. They share resources, wait their turn to collect equipment in practical work, and support and help each other extremely well.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, and many help in the organisation of activities and support for charities.
- Pupils feel that their concerns are treated seriously, and that staff take their opinions into account.
- Pupils say there is a very small amount of bullying, and have a very good idea of what the different kinds of bullying are. They say that the school deals with it quickly and effectively. They would have no hesitation in going to any member of staff, or older pupil, for help if they were worried.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They move around the building and site sensibly. In lessons, they use and carry equipment, for example, glassware and chemicals in science, very carefully.
- Attendance is average. It has improved significantly since the school became an academy, and persistent absence has reduced. The school has a wide range of approaches, including the support of outside agencies, to work with families to reduce absence, and they are effective.
- Students in the sixth form behave outstandingly well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Their attendance is above average and improving, and they are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the opportunities it provides. They appreciate the level of support they receive, at both academic and personal levels.

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

- The headteacher provides excellent direction for the school to improve. He is well supported by other leaders. Senior and other leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have eliminated inadequate teaching. They have a clear vision of moving all teaching towards good and outstanding. Procedures to check on the effectiveness of teaching are good. Training and support for teachers and staff new to leadership posts have led to improvements in both. Teachers have targets to help them improve, and these are linked to their personal, professional development, pupils' progress and the school's priorities.
- The school has very good links with NEEEP. The school benefits significantly from these in improving the teaching and leadership skills of its staff.
- The school manages the range of subjects it teaches extremely well. It has a clear focus on widening the experience of its pupils, and organises a wide range of trips and visitors to enrich pupils' learning. For example, pupils are involved in community drama, and they visit universities, other towns, art galleries and businesses.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The programme of visits makes an important contribution to this, as does teaching which brings pupils into contact with art, poetry, literature, scientific discovery and the customs and traditions of other cultures.
  - The school is effective in encouraging tolerance and understanding, and in eliminating all forms of discrimination. It is effective in making sure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well, and that their progress improves. Standards are rising, teaching is good and becoming better, pupils' attendance and behaviour have improved. These improvements demonstrate the school's strong capacity for further improvement.
  - Most parents and carers are pleased with the school, and the school's own survey confirms this.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is extremely well informed about the standards pupils reach, the progress they make and how examination results compare with results nationally. It monitors how effectively the school spends its funds to support different groups of pupils and, in particular, those pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium. Governors challenge the headteacher and examine performance data and expenditure rigorously. They check that the school has effective procedures to evaluate how good teaching is, and that teachers' progress on salary scales is linked to pupils' progress, professional training and the school's priorities for improvement. Governors know how the school rewards good teaching and deals with underperformance. They are well trained through NEEEP, and fully meet their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding requirements and in ensuring that all staff are properly checked before taking up appointment.
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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>	138084
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	406696

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<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>	1584
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	344
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bert Foster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeff Brindle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 424266
<b>Fax number</b>	01255 473174
<b>Email address</b>	admin@countyhigh.org.uk

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