

The Wey Valley School and Sports College

Dorchester Road, Weymouth, DT3 5AN

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 requires improvement because students do not make enough progress in mathematics.
- Overall teaching is not yet good enough as teachers' feedback does not always show students what level they should be aiming for and how they can improve their learning.
- Teachers' explanations are often far too long.
- Teachers are not making enough use of progress information in lessons to routinely make sure that work is appropriately matched to students' different levels of ability. There is insufficient challenge in science lessons.
- Actions taken by senior leaders to improve teaching have not yet produced consistently good teaching across all subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, working closely with the governing body, has set a clear direction for this new school. Together, they are sharply focused on securing improved outcomes for students.
- Teaching in physical education (PE) and art is good with much that is outstanding.
- The behaviour of students is good. They feel safe, are very attentive in lessons and express pride in their school.
- The school works effectively to include all students in its community. It develops the leadership qualities of students well and offers a wide range of activities outside of lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons. Three of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at examples of students' work and considered the quality of marking and written feedback given to students.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, three groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the school's independent self-evaluation partner who advises the school on its development.
- Thirty-two submissions to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were received. In addition, inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents and carers. Returns from 49 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documentation, the school's own information on students' current progress, monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hazlewood	Additional Inspector
Martin Budge	Additional Inspector
Margaret Faull	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than most secondary schools.
- The school became an academy in September 2012. It is affiliated to, but not sponsored by, the Schools Cooperative Society. When the predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- There are as yet no public examination results to allow the school's performance to be measured against the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action is also above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for service children and for children known to be eligible for free school meals, is in line with that found nationally.
- The school makes some use of early entry for GCSE examinations in mathematics.
- A small number of students are taught vocational courses at Weymouth College as part of the Chesil Partnership.
- A very small number of students receive alternative education at The Compass pupil referral unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of students make at least good progress in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that students' work is marked more regularly and in more detail so that they know how well they are doing and what to do to improve their work
 - giving students more opportunities to work on their own
 - setting work at the right level in lessons, especially in science.
- Improve rates of progress in mathematics so that all students, including those eligible for support through the pupil premium, make the progress that is expected of them.
- Accelerate the impact of actions taken by leaders and managers by:
 - ensuring a consistent approach to target setting across all subjects so that students are clear about the levels and grades they should be aiming for
 - sharing more effectively and systematically the better practice evident in the teaching of PE and art
 - ensuring a more consistent and rigorous approach by middle leaders to the implementation of policies on using progress information and the development of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students are not achieving well because there is not enough consistently good teaching across the school. The current Year 11 students are not making sufficiently rapid progress in mathematics.
- Students join the school with attainment that is below average, as shown by tests taken in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school's information for this year indicates that the proportion of students gaining five good quality GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, is likely to be below the national average. Standards in English, however, have risen over the past year as a result of targeted support for students and better teaching in the subject.
- A small number of students were entered early for GCSE mathematics this year. This policy has not hindered their potential, and all students have the opportunity to continue with the subject in order to reach their target grades.
- Progress in lessons slows when students have to listen to extended explanations by their teachers or wait their turn to contribute to whole-class discussion. Although their concentration does not waver, students are not given enough opportunities to participate actively in their learning, for example through practical work or small group work.
- In many lessons students are given good opportunities to develop their literacy skills. For example, in one Year 8 geography lesson, after an engaging starter activity about tourism in Antarctica, students were given a short written task and were reminded quickly about the use of connectives in their writing. A reading recovery programme for a small number of students in Year 7 is helping to improve students' skills. Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding has been used well, and tracking information shows that literacy standards in Year 7 have risen this year.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making good progress because of effective in-class support and specific, well-focused small-group work.
- The school has clear and precise records of how it steps in to support students. In English, Year 7 students eligible for pupil premium funding now make better progress than other students. In mathematics, however, there is less impact with this group and many of them have not yet caught up.
- The very small number of students who are educated off site with an alternative provider are closely monitored and make good progress because of the individual support they receive there.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, particularly in English, the quality is still too variable, and there is not enough that is consistently good to ensure all students make good progress in all classes and subjects.
- In some subjects, teachers' expectations are too low, resulting in a level of challenge which is not high enough to stretch the most able students. This is particularly the case in science.
- Where teaching is at its best, carefully structured activities are used to ensure that every student makes rapid and sustained progress. For example, in one outstanding physical education lesson the main skills required for good fielding in softball were developed quickly, with students assessing themselves and moving on to a different skill when they had mastered each one.
- In lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers do not plan a variety of tasks to cater for the different ability levels of students. This hinders the pace at which some students can develop new skills and understanding, and slows progress.
- Inspectors saw examples of very good questioning by teachers. In a Year 8 history class students had been encouraged over time to carefully link their comments in class discussions to

previous contributions, resulting in a high quality debate. Where teaching required improvement, questioning generally only encouraged one-word or short-phrase responses and did not give the majority of learners enough time to think of a more considered response.

- Too often students are unaware of their academic targets and sometimes their targets are either set too low or are too easy. Although students' books are marked regularly, the written feedback students receive does not always give them a clear enough picture of specifically how they can improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are used to support students well in English, mathematics and PE where they are attached to the subject area and seen as effective members of the subject team.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. There are many educational visits, a wide range of sports clubs and good musical and cultural opportunities. The school also runs its own radio station and it gives all students the chance to take part in a sports leadership development programme through PE lessons. All of these experiences provide valuable learning opportunities for students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Good relationships between students and staff are evident throughout the school. Students respect their teachers and this makes a strong contribution to the positive atmosphere seen in the majority of lessons. In some lessons where the teaching is not as effective, students can be too passive.
- Behaviour is enhanced by a reward system which is used consistently by teachers and appreciated by students. Around the school, at change of lessons, at lunchtime and in a variety of contexts behaviour is also good. Students are generally courteous and polite towards each other.
- Different groups of students told the inspectors that they are proud of their school. They appreciate the range of sporting and cultural activities that are available to them. Students report that they feel safe and that incidents of bullying are rare and effectively dealt with by the school. They are clear about risks and dangers, including cyber bullying, misuse of the internet and of the risks posed by extremist views.
- A large majority of parents and carers who responded to 'Parent View' expressed confidence that the school provides a safe environment where their children are happy and that behaviour is good.
- Since September 2012 robust action has been taken to improve the attendance of those students who find coming to school difficult. As a result, rates of attendance have improved so that they are now close to the national average.
- No permanent exclusions have taken place this year.
- The school is a cohesive community which models cooperative values by being inclusive at all levels.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management are not good and require improvement because there is too much inconsistency in the implementation of key policies by middle leaders.
- There is too much variation in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching, the use of academic targets and the quality of written feedback to students in different subject areas. The expertise of some middle leaders, evident in high performing subjects, is not being shared effectively enough with weaker ones.
- Senior leaders have implemented a teaching and learning project to improve the quality of teaching across the school. This has involved all staff working in small groups and engaging in joint planning and peer observation. While this has produced some improvement in the past year, the pace of development has not been rapid enough to ensure consistently good teaching

across the school.

- The headteacher and governing body have an ambitious vision for the school. They have worked hard to found the school as a cooperative academy working in partnership with the community it serves on the basis of shared values. Raising pupils' achievement is central to their vision.
- Senior leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and these judgements are used well to track improvements or provide additional support where it is needed.
- A thorough system is in place to check on staff performance and to set targets for their development and improvement. There is a clear link between staff performance and salary progression.
- Senior leaders plan the curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of all students. The proportion of students taking vocational qualifications is being reduced as part of a re-evaluation of the range of subjects on offer. From September 2013 the school is remodelling Key Stage 3 as a two-year programme of study.
- Safeguarding procedures for students within school and at off-site provision meet statutory requirements.
- Senior leaders have clear and precise records detailing the allocation of the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding to support students who are at risk of disadvantage. These fund individually targeted support, extra catch-up sessions and smaller classes. This expenditure is making a significant difference for students in English but less so in mathematics.
- The school is supported well by an independent, external 'self-evaluation partner' who provides challenge and support to the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Of the parents and carers who responded to 'Parent View', 91% said they would recommend this school to others.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The Chair of the Governing Body leads the governing body with a clear moral purpose and ensures that governors take an active role in the life of the school, providing an appropriate level of challenge and support. A reduction in the total number of governors has enabled a renewed focus on improving achievement. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through, for example, regular attendance at key meetings where senior leaders discuss information about students' progress. This gives them a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Governor training has been provided by the Dorset governor development service and by the Schools Cooperative Society. This has enhanced the governors' understanding of the school's performance information which they now use to compare to other similar schools. Governors monitor the impact of the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding and the impact of strategies to improve the quality of teaching by regular contact with senior leaders. They ensure performance management decisions make accurate checks of teachers' performance based on students' progress, and that it is appropriately linked with pay. The school budget is kept under regular review. The opportunity of academy conversion has been used positively to emphasise the cooperative values on which the ethos of the school is based.

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	138616
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	409420

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	926
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Day
Headteacher	Philip Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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