

Tewkesbury School

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, GL20 8DF

Inspection dates 3–4 July 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.

- Achievement requires improvement because too few students make good progress between the ages of 11 to 16 and in the sixth form.
- Not enough students reach the higher grades A*-A at GCSE because of a lack of sufficient challenge in many subjects.
- Teaching is not consistently good across subjects or year groups and does not lead to students' good progress over time.
- Teachers often give work that is too easy; they do not use questions well enough to encourage students to think deeply and marking does not always help students to improve their work.
- Leadership and management require improvement because although teaching and achievement are improving, leaders and governors have not made sure that they are good.
- There is not a clear and simple system to check students' progress that is used and understood by all. The information the school does collect is not used well enough to identify students who need extra help.
- Good practice in areas where standards are higher has not been effectively shared to raise standards in other areas across the school.
- Subject leaders do not always take enough responsibility for the work in their departments and do not always hold their teams fully to account for the quality of teaching and learning.
- The sixth form requires improvement because teaching has not been strong enough for students to make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- He has not been afraid to take difficult decisions so that teaching and achievement in the weaker subjects are improving.
- Students make good progress in science and in humanities subjects.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school and feel very safe.
- There is an excellent range of sporting and cultural activities available to students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons or parts of lessons, including 15 that were seen together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at students' progress in mathematics, English, science, languages, and humanities and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, five members of the governing body and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of students' work.
- Inspectors took note of the 119 responses from parents on the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' and students' responses to the school's own recent surveys and written comments made by parents while attending parents' evenings were considered.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roy Blachford	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector
Rob Issac	Additional Inspector
Shahnaz Maqsood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tewkesbury School converted to become an academy school in January 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was previously inspected by Ofsted in May 2010, it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger in size than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students are of White British heritage and there is a low proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of students including looked-after children, those belonging to families with a parent serving in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average. There are currently a very small number of students who are in the care of the local authority and above-average numbers of students from service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. There is a low proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A high number of students spend some of their time studying work-related courses at 'Launch Pad' (a specially-resourced off-site provision providing vocational education in partnership with a number of other Gloucestershire schools).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2012 at the launch of the academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in all subjects to ensure that all groups of students make better than the expected three levels of progress between ages 11 to 16 and in the sixth form by making sure that:
 - work is set at the right level for all students so that it is not too easy or too hard
 - students receive clear feedback in lessons and in marking so that they know how to improve their work and that all act on the advice given to them by teachers
 - questioning builds on students' responses so that it probes and extends thinking
 - teachers always expect the very best work from all groups of students in their classes
 - teachers in the sixth form always expect the very best from their students and keep a close check on progress made by them.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing a clear and simple system for tracking students' progress that is used and understood by all staff and enables leaders and governors to easily check the progress of different groups of students
 - sharing good practice so that students do as well in all subjects as they do in the best
 - making sure that subject leaders take more direct responsibility for their departments, particularly for improving the quality of teaching and in holding teams to account for the progress of the students in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because students do not make consistently good progress in all subjects. For example, students' progress is slower in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 than in science and humanities. This means that standards are also higher in some subjects than others.
- Students enter the school with attainment that is just above average. GCSE examination results are also just above average overall and rising at a rate similar to the national trend. The proportion of students gaining the highest A* and A grades in most subjects, however, is broadly average.
- The progress measures of most groups of students are broadly average. In 2012, while the proportion of students making the expected progress in mathematics exceeded the national picture, the corresponding figure in English was much lower.
- The achievement of all groups of students, including those whose circumstances makes them vulnerable, is variable and too few make good progress, indicating that the school's commitment to equal opportunities is not completely put into practice.
- Inspection evidence indicates that current students are making better progress in English and mathematics than those who have recently completed their examinations.
- The school has maintained a traditional curriculum focused on GCSE subjects, with an increasing range of work-related options. The school works with other providers to provide specialist courses to suit students and their career aspirations. The school monitors the progress of students attending these courses, including those who attend the 'Launchpad' to ensure they attend regularly and do as well as possible.
- The school has, correctly, decided to no longer enter students early for English and mathematics at GCSE level. Although the more able generally benefited from this policy, the grades of a small number of middle ability students have been limited to a C because once they have finished the GCSE course, they use the time to improve or catch up in other subjects.
- In the sixth form, there is a trend of slow improvement, although A level results remain broadly average. A high number of students are not successful with their courses in Year 12 and attainment at AS level is below average. This is because too many teachers expect too little of their students and do not keep a careful check on how well they are making progress. This inconsistent picture between subjects and courses and students making expected rather than good progress means achievement requires improvement.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive extra help in lessons and in small groups. Some of these students are making accelerated progress and the extra help and focused teaching is helping them to catch up. However, there are occasions when work is not adjusted in lessons and these students find it too difficult so they do not make as much progress as they could.
- All groups of students eligible for support from the pupil premium receive additional help in classes, in small groups and in funding for trips and transport so they have a full experience of school. In 2012, these students were approximately two thirds of a grade behind the others in English and one grade in mathematics. Although this gap did not narrow from the previous year, the school has focused more funding on academic support and these students are making better progress this year.
- Students eligible for support from the Year 7 catch-up premium have been given additional literacy support and help with reading as well as visits from staff before they joined the school to help them settle in. These students are making good progress.
- Achievement in lessons is variable. Students make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress in some lessons, where expectations and challenge are high and work is adapted to meet the needs of students of different abilities. In a significant minority of lessons seen during the inspection, this was not the case and progress was no better than adequate

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because although it is improving, it has not consistently been good across all subjects. There are examples of good and, in some cases, outstanding practice but not enough that has been regularly good for students to make good progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure work is at the right level for students. It is sometimes pitched at one level so it is too hard for some students and too easy for others. Often, it is pitched to the middle of the class, but occasionally it is pitched to the more able students so it is too difficult for many students in the class.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to students across the school lacks consistency. It does not always show students what they need to do to improve their work or follow up whether students have acted on this advice.
- When questioning, teachers do not always ask follow-up questions to extend and probe thinking and to involve more students in these sessions.
- Some teachers expect too little of their students, both in terms of work-rate and in terms of intellectual demand. In these weaker lessons, teaching is slow and uninteresting and includes undemanding activities.
- In the best teaching, such as in a Year 7 science lesson, students worked with energy and excitement as they cooperated in groups to research the characteristics of different animals. They confidently presented their research findings to the class, who, guided expertly by the class teacher, asked perceptive questions of those making the presentations.
- There are examples of strong teaching in the sixth form. For example, in a Year 12 Spanish lesson, students made rapid gains in their speaking and listening skills when they made presentations to the class following research carried out on film sites. The teacher got the very best out of students by asking provocative questions that prompted all to think deeply about their work. Over time, teaching in the sixth form has not been strong enough in all subjects for students to make good progress.
- Carefully targeted support is helping disabled students and those with special educational needs to catch up with their peers. Teaching assistants often make a good contribution to their support, both in lessons and in work with individuals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The majority of students have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are eager and enthusiastic in lessons and respond well to the effective systems used to manage behaviour.
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to their consistently good behaviour around the school and in a wide range of enrichment activities and assemblies.
- Students were keen to engage inspectors in conversation and share with them how much they enjoyed school. Students are invariably polite, courteous and friendly, offering help and assistance to visitors and other pupils.
- Students say they feel very safe in school and this is endorsed by the overwhelming majority of parents. If students have a problem, they know they can talk to a member of staff who will help them solve it.
- Students have a thorough understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that the use of racist or homophobic language is extremely rare. If it does occur, students are confident that it will be challenged and dealt with successfully by staff. The school actively encourages all students to express their individuality and appreciate that people are different.
- Attendance is broadly average but is improving for all groups of students. Most students come to school regularly and are punctual.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because students are sometimes passive in lessons and a very small minority occasionally misbehave, which spoils the learning and enjoyment of others.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as teaching and achievement are not yet good. There is too much difference in how well students do in some subjects and best practice is not shared effectively across the school in order that students do as well in all subjects.
- In recent years, subject leaders and managers have not been given enough responsibility for developing their teams, particularly in relation to improving the quality of teaching. These leaders often know the weaknesses of their departments but have not felt able to act to secure improvement or have been unwilling to take action.
- The school does not have an accurate picture of the levels students are working at in all subjects as they move through the school. It uses a system for monitoring the progress of students that is based on targets and predictions rather than on the actual grades that students are currently working at. There is little check on the accuracy of these assessments. This process makes it difficult to identify those students that are falling behind. In addition, the data that the school collects are not used effectively to hold all teachers to account for the progress of the students in their classes.
- The relatively new headteacher has tackled the school's weaknesses with determination and tenacity. He has not been afraid to take the difficult decisions needed to improve teaching and much of his time during the first year of his headship has been taken up with a range of issues involving the effectiveness of some members of staff. Measures are now being put in place which are beginning to accelerate students' achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher has ensured that all staff, leaders, and governors now have a thorough understanding of how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve. As a result, self-evaluation is now accurate and this, together with better teaching and improved progress, shows that the leaders have shown a secure capacity to improve further.
- Good systems have been put in place to monitor the quality of lessons. Clear feedback, coupled with appropriate advice and training, is offered to teachers whose performance falls short of the mark. However, some leaders do not always follow up these shortcomings with sufficient urgency so that the improvement in teaching is not as rapid as it could be.
- Performance management is in place and there is an increasingly strong link between salary progression and teachers meeting their targets.
- The curriculum supports students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well through the wide range of opportunities for students to extend their education outside of classes. In particular, the arts and music are very well promoted. This is a significant strength of the school and does much to support students' personal development.
- There is a strong partnership with neighbouring schools to provide for work-related courses which give students opportunities to study a wide range of courses. These partnerships, and work with other providers, have increased the range of courses on offer for Key Stage 4.
- The leadership of the sixth form requires improvement as there is too much variation between subjects and teaching is not consistently good over time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have studied the published performance information on the school and are aware of how the school compares with other schools. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and where performance is less strong. They sign off pay awards for staff who meet their targets and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled. They know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and the difference this is making, although they realise there is more to do. Governors attend courses and share what they learn with all governors. Governors have links with subject areas and visit to see for themselves what is happening in the school.

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	137752
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	412193

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1650
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Davis
Headteacher	Gary Watson
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01684 292152
Fax number	01684 850742
Email address	office@tewkesburyschool.org

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

