

# Rye College

The Grove, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7NQ

## Inspection dates

10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	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.

- Students in the academy achieve well and make good progress from lower than average starting points. The percentage attaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is in line with the national average.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to plan lessons which are effective and help most students to learn well.
- The academy is led very well. The headteacher, governors and staff share a clear vision for the academy and are ambitious for their students' success. They have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning and, as a result, standards are good in most subjects.
- Almost all groups of students achieve well, including those who need extra help to catch up. Gaps in attainment between different groups of students are closing rapidly due to effective planning and use of resources.
- The behaviour of students in lessons and around the site is good. Students are proud of the academy and say it is a caring and friendly community. They enjoy being there and feel happy and safe.
- The academy has a successful curriculum which is carefully planned to meet the needs of students of all abilities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well, both within the curriculum and through a range of cross-curricular and enrichment activities.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is consistently good and in a few lessons teachers do not use information about students' progress effectively to support their individual needs.
- Teachers do not always give students guidance on how to improve when marking their work. As a result, students are not always clear about what they need to do to make progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, a number of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also attended two tutor group sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, heads of departments, staff, several groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and the Chair of the Academy Trust.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including academy policies, data on standards and progress, safeguarding and lesson observations, improvement plans, anonymised performance management records, the headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the 64 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also questionnaires completed by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Heather Leatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia MacLaghlán	Additional Inspector
Ann Short	Additional Inspector
Veronica Young	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rye College is a smaller-than-average-sized 11 to 16 comprehensive school. It became an academy in September 2012. When its predecessor school, Rye College, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010 it was judged good overall.
- The academy has specialisms in the arts and enterprise.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from service families, is average.
- There are 34 students eligible for catch-up funding, which is for Year 7 students who did not attain Level 4 in English at the end of primary school.
- The proportion of students who have special educational needs and receive support through school action is higher than average. The proportion of disabled students and those on the school action plus programme, or with a statement of special educational needs, is in line with national averages.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below national averages.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students receive part of their education off-site at Plumpton College and the Entertainment Workshop situated in Rye harbour.
- The academy exceeds the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good, and more is outstanding, by ensuring that:
  - teachers always plan work that is well matched to individual students' needs
  - all teachers give students clear written guidance on how to improve their work and that students respond to the comments they receive
  - teachers give students in every subject the opportunity to develop strong literacy skills, especially in reading and writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The majority of students join the academy with attainment which is below average. Despite this, students make good, and sometimes very good, progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Students' progress has accelerated this year due to improvements brought about in teaching and learning, particularly in English; although standards in science still need improving. Academy data indicate that the proportion of students who will gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics is on track to be much higher than average this year.
- Current data suggest that all groups of students in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, including the small number of children who are looked after, disabled students and those with special educational needs, are making good or better progress in both English and mathematics. This was confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of work.
- The very small number of students for whom English is not their first language make good or better progress in line with that made by other students in the academy.
- As a result of the academy spending its pupil premium money very effectively, the levels of attainment and progress of students who are supported by the pupil premium are good. Academy data show that gaps have narrowed considerably this year and that students' average point scores will be broadly in line with last year's national averages at 39.5 for English and 39.2 for mathematics. This means that these students are now only half a GCSE grade behind others at the school in English and a quarter of a grade behind their peers in mathematics. The academy's data show that 64% of these students are on track to gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics this year.
- Students supported by the Year 7 catch-up premium are also achieving very well. They have benefited greatly from additional support with reading and one-to-one tuition in literacy and numeracy. As a result, these students have now caught up with their peers in English.
- The academy does not enter students early in Year 10 for either GCSE English or mathematics.
- A small number of students attend Plumpton College and The Entertainment Workshop in Rye harbour one day a week to study a range of vocational courses, including agriculture and production arts. The academy tracks and monitors the progress of these students closely which shows they achieve very well. A number is predicted to gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, which represents better than expected progress for this group.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Much of the teaching in the academy is good and some is outstanding. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of students and use their good subject knowledge to challenge them to achieve and progress well.
- Students are generally keen to learn and want to succeed. They respond well to their teachers and good relationships are a feature of most lessons, contributing to good learning and achievement. This also helps to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is very good.
- When teaching is most effective, teachers have an accurate knowledge of students' starting points, progress and what they are capable of achieving and plan work that meets the needs of students of all abilities. In a small number of lessons, however, work is not planned carefully enough to support the needs of all learners in the class.
- In the best lessons, teachers assess students' progress by questioning the students throughout the lesson. Good questioning is also used to stretch and challenge students, enabling them to make rapid progress. For example, in a Year 8 food technology class, skilful questioning about types of sugars and their properties led to the students considering the differences between them and their possible uses in some depth.
- While most teachers mark work regularly in the vast majority of subjects, this is not always the

case and a few teachers do not provide feedback that is as detailed and useful as it could be. The most helpful marking seen in books both pinpointed what students needed to do to improve their work and expected them to make a response to the comments made, enabling them to make good progress as a result.

- Teachers are aware of the need to improve students' literacy skills across all subjects. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of strategies to support students' needs and help them to develop their reading and writing skills. In some lessons, however, literacy is not addressed clearly enough and students do not progress as well as they should.
- Those who need additional help are supported very effectively through one-to-one tuition to enable them to catch up rapidly with their peers.

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

- Behaviour, both in lessons and around the academy, is good. Students are generally polite, courteous and respectful. In most lessons they cooperate well with staff and have positive attitudes to learning. However, in a small minority of lessons where teaching is not strong, students are occasionally inattentive and do not engage in their learning.
- Students say they feel happy and safe at the academy and that bullying, although rare, is dealt with effectively when it does occur. They are aware of a range of different forms of bullying, including cyber and homophobic bullying. There is an effective programme in place to enable students to develop their awareness of how to stay safe through assemblies, 'drop down days' and visiting speakers. Students say they find the advice given to them informative and helpful.
- Students appreciate the very good relationships that they have with staff. Year 9 students say that the academy is a very friendly and tolerant community, which has a family feel. One Year 10 student commented on how caring the teachers are and said the academy is 'like a second home'.
- The academy has introduced a new behaviour management policy this year, which has enabled it to manage students' behaviour more effectively. As a result, exclusions have reduced significantly since September.
- Attendance is improving, and persistent absenteeism is reducing, although, overall, it remains just below average. The academy is working hard to send strong messages about the importance of regular attendance and is striving to ensure it is brought in line with national averages.
- The vast majority of parents and staff believe that behaviour in the academy is good.

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

- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders all have a very clear vision for the academy and have put in place robust improvement planning to help it move from being good to outstanding. The headteacher's ambition, supported by the governors and the Academy Trust, is to build a Learning Village that will be at the heart of the local community.
- Where teaching has been identified as not being strong enough, performance has been challenged and teachers supported to improve. The headteacher has not hesitated to take firm action when improvements have been limited. The academy has an effective training programme in place for staff, which is linked clearly to teachers' performance and students' progress.
- The academy has asked professionals from a nearby school to come in and help it tackle underperformance in English and science. They have looked at students' work and progress and successfully supported staff to improve teaching and standards in these subjects. The academy is aware, however, that science still needs further improvement and has plans in place to address this.

- The curriculum is flexible and designed to meet the needs of all students. The academy has links with some local providers of vocational courses and the Rye Studio School, which opens in September 2013, will provide a clear pathway to post-16 education that does not exist locally at the moment.
  - The academy has used its pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding very effectively in a range of ways to raise the attainment of these students, meeting their individual needs well. As a result, gaps are narrowing rapidly at both key stages.
  - The academy's leaders and teachers work hard to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form.
  - The academy offers students an impressive range of experiences which contribute greatly to their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and help to raise aspirations. This is evident not only in lessons, but also through a wide range of other opportunities, including cultural visits and activities. The academy also has links with schools in Ghana and France.
  - The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. The academy takes all reasonable steps to ensure the behaviour and safety of students who attend off-site provision. Staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection training.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The headteacher reports to, and meets with, the full governing body each month. As a result, governors have an accurate insight into the academy's strengths and areas for development and they hold the headteacher strongly to account for all aspects of the academy's performance. The Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher jointly instigated the outside support brought in to help improve standards in English and science.
    - Through the work carried out by governors linked to different subjects, the governing body is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, how good performance is rewarded and what is being done to tackle underperformance where it exists. Governors have an overview of the academy's performance management systems, which they monitor carefully. They analyse a range of data closely and know how the academy's performance compares with that of similar schools and schools nationally.
    - Governors know exactly how the academy has spent its pupil premium funding and have monitored the impact in raising standards and narrowing the gap. They rightly believe it to be highly effective. There is considerable expertise within the governing body which means governors are able to ensure that the academy's finances and other resources are managed very well.
    - Governors have up-to-date training in a wide range of aspects of school management and are therefore able to fulfil all of their statutory duties effectively.
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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>	138624
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	412738

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	730
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Burnett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Cockerham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01797 222545
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