

# Coombeshead Academy

Coombeshead Road, Newton Abbott, Devon, TQ12 1PT

**Inspection dates** 17–18 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although progress is improving, achievement is not yet secure. In particular, students do not reach the standards of which they are capable in mathematics.
- Different groups of students make unequal progress.
- Students are not always given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The school's marking policy is not followed consistently by all staff.
- There is too much variation in achievement between subjects.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the progress of its students is not good enough and varies across different subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Both teaching and students' achievement are improving rapidly because of the good leadership and management of the headteacher and other staff with leadership roles.
- Teaching is now good so that students in the school are making more accelerated progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of effective support.
- Students are very proud of their school. They show respect to one another and to adults. Students feel safe and their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Governors are highly effective and show a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school so that the students are well prepared to be considerate citizens.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, of which 12 were jointly observed with a member of the school's leadership team. Inspectors visited an assembly, tutor groups and other learning activities.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students, talked with students around the school and scrutinised samples of students' work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other leaders, three members of the governing body and a consultant who works with the school.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including the school's records of current students' progress, self-evaluation summaries and improvement plans, behaviour and attendance logs, records relating to safeguarding and those relating to the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors took account of the questionnaire completed by 77 staff, together with 40 responses submitted to the on-line questionnaire Parent View and one letter from a parent.

## Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Malcolm Davison	Additional Inspector
Teresa Gilpin	Additional Inspector
Rob Isaac	Additional Inspector
David Nebesnuick	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, students from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is in line with the national average.
- The school's sixth form courses are provided in partnership with Teign School and Newton Abbot College.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at South Devon College to follow work-related courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- Coombeshead Academy converted to become an academy school in August 2011. When its predecessor school, Coombeshead College, was last inspected in March 2011 it was judged to be satisfactory.

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

- Raise achievement by making sure that:
  - all groups of students make at least consistently good progress in all the subjects that they study throughout the school
  - students' progress in mathematics improves to equal that of English
  - students in the sixth form make more rapid and consistent progress across all subjects.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
  - increasing the opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning
  - making sure that the school's marking policy is followed consistently by all staff so that all students are clear on how to improve and are able to respond to teachers' comments.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students join the school with average levels of attainment. In 2012 they had not made enough progress by the end of Year 11; the school's current projections show that overall attainment is average but improving rapidly.
- Students' attainment and progress are not consistent. More-able students make more progress than those of middle ability. There is too much variation between the progress that students make in different subjects. In some subjects their progress is good, but in others it is much lower. Progress in mathematics is not as strong as in English.
- Although teaching has been improved and is now good, the sixth form has not added sufficient value to students' achievement, and here too there have been significant differences in the progress that students made in different subjects.
- Attainment at the end of Year 11 is improving. The numbers of students achieving five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics was average in 2012. The school's projections indicate further improvement this year.
- The school has taken actions to improve students' standards in reading as this helps the students to succeed in all their subjects. There is a rolling programme across all subjects where students engage in purposeful reading.
- The needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs are considered carefully when they join the school. Appropriate interventions, including the provision of one-to-one teaching, are then provided. This enables these students to make good progress.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding and has drawn up a detailed action plan to support the progress of eligible students. Students of all abilities are supported, for example by reducing class sizes, delivering phonics programmes, organising small-group work and making sure that all students can attend cultural enrichment activities.
- At the end of Year 11, results in English for these students are about half a grade lower than their peers and those in mathematics are almost a grade lower. However, the gap in achievement is closing and the numbers of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics who benefit from the pupil premium increased greatly in 2012.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is being used to provide small-group and one-to-one teaching for 24 students. Almost all those involved are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Early entry for GCSE is used only for specific groups of students where the school is sure they will benefit. A group of more-able students complete their GCSE course in mathematics at the end of Year 10 and then follow an AS course in mathematics. There is no evidence that this limits their potential as a re-sit is still available to them if needed.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities for all its students and has introduced strategies to reduce the differences in progress between groups and to support all students in achieving their potential. This is beginning to have an effect, but it is too early to see the impact in improved examination results.
- The small number of students who attend South Devon College for part of their week make good progress in the well-chosen courses they are following.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is now good and is leading to increasing student achievement. A detailed scrutiny of students' work, combined with discussions involving students and staff and reference to school data, shows that across the school students' progress is more rapid than that of their predecessors and that there are indications that teaching has improved since the school became

an academy.

- The headteacher has taken rigorous actions to improve teaching. Many new roles have been created in the school's leadership team, all with a focus on teaching and learning. Weak teaching has been eradicated and a large number of new teachers have joined the school. All these measures have contributed to the improvements in teaching which are supported by the school's own clear records and detailed projections for student outcomes in 2013.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge. They set high expectations and show enthusiasm for their subjects, and students respond well to the tasks provided for them, extending their knowledge and deepening their understanding.
- In the best lessons, teachers make sure that work is provided at the right level for all students, probe understanding with skilful questioning and give students opportunities to undertake a variety of tasks and take responsibility for their own learning. In less successful lessons the teachers provide too much direction and limit the variety of activities so that students are not given enough opportunity to work by themselves.
- Lessons are well planned. In an outstanding Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher had analysed the outcomes of a recent assessment and organised a variety of personalised activities for different groups within the class that enabled all students to improve their weaker areas.
- Students are eager to contribute to their lessons and to enter into discussions. In a Year 7 French lesson, students were happy in developing their oral skills when the teacher made good use of the target language and provided support for those who were less confident.
- Almost all teaching in the sixth form is now good and, as a result, students' progress is improving. In a Year 12 chemistry lesson, students developed good investigative skills, worked well in groups and developed their understanding through mature discussion.
- Skilled teaching in English means that nearly all students, including those with special educational needs, can read and write well enough to make progress in their other subjects and are increasingly well prepared for the future.
- Most students know their targets and are helped by their teachers to move on to the next level of attainment. However, students are not always clear about exactly how to improve their work because the quality of marking is variable. There are examples of marking that praises the specific good aspects of students' work, provides students with clear guidance on improvement and results in them responding to this marking, in line with the school's policy. Other marking, however, is infrequent, less detailed and offers less advice on how students can improve their work. Students are not always given the opportunity to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Almost all parents and carers who expressed a view were confident that their children were benefiting from good teaching.

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

- Students' behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. In almost all lessons students concentrate well, showing positive attitudes and a desire to learn.
  - Teachers are skilled in managing students' behaviour and they follow consistent policies so that students know there are high expectations. On the rare occasions that there is disruption in lessons it is dealt with effectively.
  - The school's behaviour logs show that students' behaviour is improving and that the frequency of serious incidents is decreasing rapidly.
  - Students show courtesy and good manners to each other and to staff; they are very proud of their school.
  - Students move sensibly and safely around the large school site so that they are punctual for their lessons.
  - Students feel safe in school and the curriculum supports them well in learning how to stay safe. They have a good understanding of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites.
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- Students report that incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying, are rare and are dealt with swiftly. A group of students have trained to become Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and have recently gained the prestigious Diana Award in recognition of their work in the school. There is hardly any evidence of racial or other prejudice-based bullying. The school promotes good relations and will not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- Attendance is increasing rapidly and is now average for secondary schools.
- Sixth form students display mature good manners and are good role models for younger students.
- The school checks that students attending off-site provision attend regularly and that there are no concerns with their welfare.
- Almost all parents and carers who expressed a view considered that behaviour is managed well. They also said that their children are happy at the school and feel safe.

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

- School leaders set high expectations for staff and students. They have taken effective actions to raise students' attainment and standards of teaching. The headteacher's commitment to further improve all aspects of the school is shared by all staff and governors.
- As part of the school's drive to improve results, the headteacher and governors took strategic measures to improve the quality of leadership at all levels. The school's projections show that results are now improving rapidly.
- The management of teaching and its impact on learning are good. Joint observations during the inspection showed that the school's judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate.
- There is regular monitoring and evaluation of students' achievement and the results are used to produce well-focused improvement plans.
- The results of departmental evaluations are used to provide a wide variety of appropriate professional development which responds to the needs of staff. Much of the training is led by the school's own skilled staff.
- The system of managing teachers' performance is well organised and has been updated to respond to recent national changes. There is evidence that salary progression is taken seriously and that it occurs only when merited by sustained good performance.
- The school's range of subjects and courses provides well for the needs and interests of its students. At Key Stage 4 there is a good balance between GCSE courses and high quality work-related courses. By working in partnership with nearby colleges the school is able to provide a very wide range of courses and enrichments for sixth form students. The school reviews its provision each year to make sure that it is responsive to change.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, both through the curriculum and in the wider life of the school. It is fostered by a range of visits and by the wide variety of opportunities in music, art, drama and sport, together with effective school assemblies and religious education lessons that give many opportunities for students to reflect on serious issues.
- All aspects of safeguarding are fully met. The governing body and senior leaders consider that keeping students safe is one of their prime responsibilities.
- Parents and carers agree that the school is well led and managed and this is supported by the school's staff. Of the parents who offered their views, almost all would recommend the school to other parents and carers.
- Since converting to academy status the school does not receive support from the local authority but uses external consultants to check its performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is strengthened by regular training. Governors have a good knowledge of how well the school is doing and the quality of teaching in different subject areas. They have a

clear role in realising the improvement plan and can speak confidently about data, including recent examination results, and the actions that have been taken to bring about improvement. They also check the school's performance through reports from senior and other leaders and discussions with relevant staff. They make sure that the pupil premium is targeted correctly and have started to evaluate its impact. Governors are fully involved in the performance management system for all teaching staff; all promotions, with their financial consequences, are discussed in governor committees. The governors know what the school is doing to reward good teachers and to tackle any underperformance.

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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>	137176
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	406656

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>	1149
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Leon Winston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Shanks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01626 201800
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