

Crispin School Academy

Church Road, Street, Somerset, BA16 0AD

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium falls well short of other students, despite recent improvements.
- In too many lessons students are not actively involved in their learning. Teachers' explanations are sometimes too long and not clear.
- Teachers' use of questions does not sufficiently improve pupils' understanding and so inhibits their learning.
- Senior leaders do not have a fully accurate view of the effectiveness of the academy. This has meant that weaknesses in teaching and students' progress have not been tackled with enough rigour.
- Not all students are fully aware of what to do if they are bullied. School leaders have not done enough to eliminate some homophobic and other inappropriate language.
- Governors do not check information on behaviour and bullying in sufficient detail.

The school has the following strengths

- It works well with two local colleges, external agencies and uses its link with a school in Kenya to support some work across a range of subjects.
- Attendance and exclusion rates of students with specific learning difficulties have improved.
- The marking of English work books is carried out in a way that helps the students to understand what they need to do next in their learning.
- Effective support in school, together with good use of alternative programmes of study out of school, has helped improve the behaviour of some students at risk of exclusion.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons or part-sessions, 10 of which were seen jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the teacher responsible for special educational needs provision and other staff with key responsibilities.
- Students' views were sought throughout the inspection, during lessons and at break and lunch times. Inspectors also met with groups of students from each year group.
- Staff views were noted.
- The inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the academy's own information on students' current progress, policies, planning and monitoring records.
- Inspectors paid close attention to the attendance of those students with special educational needs, students' behaviour and all aspects of safeguarding.
- An inspector met with four parents during the inspection and took into account 26 responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cliff Mainey

Additional Inspector

Rob Isaac

Additional Inspector

Shahnaz Maqsood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is slightly larger than the average secondary school and serves the town of Street and the surrounding area.
- Crispin School Academy converted to become an academy on 1 July 2011. When its predecessor school, Crispin School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Most students are of White British heritage. Very few students are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who are at risk of not doing as well as their peers and are eligible for extra government funding, which is known as pupil premium, is well below average. This may include pupils eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and those who come from service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs because of behavioural, emotional and social issues, and those who have moderate learning difficulties is below average. The proportion of students who are supported by school action is just below average. The proportion of students who have statements for disabilities and special educational needs is average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Alternative provision for some students is provided at Strode College, Bridgwater College, Glastonbury Medical Tuition Unit, Millfield School, two pupil referral units, Somerset Motor Project, Forest School, Avalon Special School, Cannington 14-16 Centre and a number of local businesses.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure students are actively involved in more lessons
 - improving teachers' use of questioning to deepen the students' understanding about their learning
 - raising teachers' expectations of students' achievement.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of the students by:
 - ensuring all students develop highly positive attitudes to learning
 - eliminating all forms of name-calling
 - recording behaviour incidents precisely, noting whether actions taken are effective and regularly checking and monitoring the frequency of incidents
 - ensuring information is analysed by both senior staff and a representative from the governing body.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that pupil premium funding is used to raise the achievement of students eligible for free school meals
 - improving the monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - improving senior leaders' understanding of best practice in teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Over the past two years not all groups of students have done as well as they should have. These groups include those who have special educational needs, including those with behaviour problems, those of lower ability, and those entitled to support through the pupil premium. In 2012, the performance of Key Stage 4 students eligible for this support was well below other students. For example, 44% of this group achieved five A* to C grades in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, compared to 72% of other students. When compared to national averages, this group of students did not do as well as others who are eligible for the pupil premium. To tackle this issue, all of these groups have received extra help to support them develop and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result their standards of attainment are starting to rise.
- Evidence gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of students' work indicates that some students currently in the academy are not achieving well as too much teaching requires improvement.
- Information from the 2012 national examination results shows that most students made progress in line with national expectations from standards on entry into Year 7, which were significantly above the national average. The proportion of students gaining at least five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly above the national average. Students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. The academy's monitoring of students' performance suggests that standards are rising.
- Senior leaders recognised that the standards attained at GCSE level in French, art and design, design and technology and geography were inadequate in 2012. They took steps to improve the quality of teaching and made staff changes. They have also stopped entering students early for French GCSE examinations, so that students can make more progress and achieve better results.
- A small proportion of students, notably in Year 8, did not make enough progress in developing their reading skills. However, most students read widely and use their literacy skills to support their learning in other subjects.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Students' learning is hampered as they are not always fully involved in their lessons. Students' lack of involvement is sometimes the result of teachers talking unnecessarily for long periods of time. In some cases, students do not play a full part in lessons because teachers' explanations are not clear. In some lessons, students' attitudes to learning are not good enough as they do not stay on task or concentrate fully on their work.
- Teachers' questions do not always encourage students to think deeply about their learning. In addition, not all work set by teachers fully challenges the students to think for themselves. These low expectations of what students can achieve hinder students' learning.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is not secure, which means that students are taught inaccurate facts.
- In better lessons, the pace of learning is fast and all students are active and fully involved in their learning. In an outstanding physical education session the teacher gave a very brief demonstration of a ball skill and the students quickly became involved in the activity. As the students worked on developing their skills, the teacher moved around groups of students to expertly guide and support individuals. Not a minute of learning time was wasted and the students made excellent progress during this session.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. The marking in English books clearly helps the students to improve their work, but this is not a strong feature in other subjects. Some good examples of the students sharing their work with their peers and giving each other feedback were observed.

In a Year 10 German oral lesson, students maturely supported each other in preparation for their forthcoming test.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Some students are tolerant of the use of the word 'gay' and many do not regard it as being homophobic. School leaders have not done enough to eliminate the use of derogatory and, on albeit rare occasions, racist language.
- A significant minority of students are unsure who they can approach if they feel they are being bullied or they want to report a racist incident. Many students report that they feel safe. Most students who have reported bullying say that it is dealt with effectively by the school.
- Students' attitudes to learning are too variable and dependent on the quality of teaching. Weaker teaching sometimes leads to students becoming distracted from their work and not making enough progress. In the worst cases, bad language and derogatory comments made by individuals go unchallenged by teachers. Conversely, confident teaching with activities which grab students' interest encourages students of all levels of ability to concentrate well and become fully engrossed.
- Students' conduct in lessons, around the academy and when leaving the site varies. In some lessons behaviour requires improvement but it is sometimes good and, on occasions, excellent. Students behaviour outside the classroom is usually good and sometimes exemplary. Students are supervised when not in lessons but staff rarely have to intervene. For example, the dining room is very busy at break and lunch times but students' behaviour is orderly and well-mannered.
- The academy has provided effective support for some students with a record of poor behaviour. For example, good use of alternative off-site provision, individual support plans and modified approaches to teaching have improved the behaviour and achievement of some students who were at risk of exclusion.
- During the past academic year, the attendance and exclusion rates for those students who find difficulty with learning or who are poorly behaved did not compare favourably with national averages. By providing mentors for these students who 'meet and greet' them on arrival, ensuing regular contact with home, and celebrating improvements in attendance, the academy has successfully reduced the level of absenteeism for these groups. Attendance overall for 2011 to 2012 is slightly better than the national average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The ways in which leaders and managers check the quality of teaching is not securing good learning in every classroom. Despite a rigorous programme of internal coaching for some teachers, there is still too much teaching that requires improvement.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the effectiveness of the academy is over-generous. Academy development planning has improved over the past year and now includes clear milestones to track progress. A number of initiatives have been put in place, such as the system to check the progress of students who are at risk of not doing as well as the others. There are also a number of plans which have only recently been put into place and so the impact cannot yet be evaluated.
- The academy does not rigorously analyse the information it records in behaviour and incident logs. Entries into these logs are not always clear, particularly about the way incidents are resolved.
- The opportunities provided for both academic subjects and vocational training courses enable students to have a suitable choice of options in Years 10 and 11. An exchange with a school in Kenya, enrichment weeks which include visits to the theatre, Parliament and a mosque, and their 'Green Flag' status help the students to widen their horizons.
- Good use is made of the local colleges, special schools and local employers to provide additional

training courses for the students. Strong links with local companies enable the students to gain work experience. There is adequate communication with external agencies over child protection issues.

- The school has used an external consultant to provide an independent view of its work.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Members of the governing body receive regular accounts of incidents and exclusion rates. However, they do not challenge the academy leaders and managers over the need to frequently check and analyse patterns of behaviour and bullying incidents. During this academic year, governors have significantly increased their level of challenge by requesting more detailed reports from the headteacher on students' progress, becoming more involved in the performance of teachers and the link to pay, and gaining a secure understanding of how the additional government funding for students at risk of not doing so well is being spent. Members of the governing body have an improved understanding of the academy. They accurately pinpoint subjects which have not done as well and they make themselves available to parents at open evenings.

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	136913
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	422976

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1091
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Bartlett
Headteacher	Paul James
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01458 442714
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