

Westlands School

Westlands Lane, Torquay, Devon, TQ13PE

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students' attainment has not improved sufficiently over the last three years. It has fallen in many respects when compared to national averages.
- Achievement is inadequate because too many students do not make enough progress in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and core science.
- Gaps in achievement between different groups of students are too wide. Boys do less well than girls. Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not make enough progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not make good progress in their final year.
- Teachers' expectations of what students should achieve are not always high enough.
- Leaders and managers are not demonstrating that they can substantially improve the school's performance.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate overall, despite the support and training provided for teachers. Inspectors observed some strong teaching, but too much is not good enough.
- Teachers do not check students' progress well enough, or use the resulting information to ensure that lessons are planned with the right level of difficulty for all ability groups.
- Checks on how well policies and new developments are put into practice in classrooms lack rigour. They have not resulted in better achievement.
- The governing body's challenges to the school about achievement and the quality of teaching have not yet successfully influenced results. The governing body is not checking effectively enough on the use of additional government funding (the pupil premium).

The school has the following strengths:

- The students have remained safe and the school is a friendly place to be.
- The school's provision for developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons, of which 19 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons, year assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the school's leadership and management team, and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with three groups of students representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Additional comments were received from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Jones

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Robert Bourdon-Pierre

Additional Inspector

Robert Isaac

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Phil Taylor

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Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Westlands School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school has a specialism in mathematics and computing and has achieved the Investors in Education Business Partnerships (IEBP), Investors in People (IiP), Healthy Schools and Investors in Careers (IiC) awards.
- Almost all students are from White British, Irish or Any other White or mixed White backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is average, while the proportion from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families because they are at risk of underachieving.
- The proportions of students who are disabled or are supported by school action and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above national averages.
- All provision for a small number of students in alternative provision is arranged by the school in collaboration with Coombe Pafford Special School and Brixham College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better and ensure that by the summer of 2014, all teachers:
 - set work at the right level to challenge all students and make sure that lessons absorb, enthuse and stretch them so that they make at least the progress that is expected of them
 - use questioning more effectively to challenge, engage and encourage students to extend their thinking and develop their reasoning further
 - provide plentiful opportunities for students to use and develop their mathematical skills in meaningful and real-life contexts
 - mark work more regularly and provide students with accurate feedback about how they can improve their work
 - check that students act upon the advice given and can demonstrate a better knowledge and understanding as a result
 - share the best practice seen in teaching, such as engaging students in assessing their own progress and in active learning, and in setting them deadlines to complete tasks that accelerate their progress.
- Raise achievement, particularly for boys and the more able, by:
 - supporting and challenging teachers to bring about rapid improvements to their teaching and

leadership and management, especially in English, mathematics and core science

- ensuring that assessment information is used systematically to better inform the planning of learning for all students in lessons
- monitoring the progress of individual students better so that all teachers know when to intervene to support those at risk of underachieving
- eradicating or significantly reducing gaps between different groups of learners and helping students to make better progress in the second year of the sixth form.

■ Improve leadership and management, including governance by:

- involving all leaders, managers and governors in a thorough and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and using this information to construct and implement a clear plan for improvement that includes challenging, measurable targets and timescales, and that has a positive impact on students' learning and progress
- equipping all leaders with the skills to tackle the school's weaknesses and ensure this is done with greater urgency
- strengthening the effectiveness of all leaders in monitoring agreed policies and procedures and in taking appropriate actions to raise the quality of teaching to accelerate the progress of learners in a clear, positive and measurable way
- ensuring that the governing body challenges school leaders about students' examination performance, the quality of teaching and the effective use of pupil-premium funding.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Too many students do not make enough progress in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and core science.
- Students join the school with below-average attainment overall, especially in literacy and numeracy. They make inadequate progress in their five years at the school and many have underachieved by the end of Year 11 in English, mathematics and core science.
- Generally, students do not make enough progress in other GCSE subjects either, although there is evidence that the situation is beginning to improve. Students value the time staff spend helping them to reach their targets in Years 10 and 11. This makes a difference, but the root cause of underachievement is that too much teaching is not good enough.
- The school recognises that too many of the more-able students do not make expected progress, particularly in core science, and this means that they are not adequately prepared for the next steps in their education or the world of work. Students who follow work-related courses in science make better progress than their peers nationally.
- Students supported by the pupil-premium funding do not achieve well enough. In 2012, the average points scores (the measure by which all students are assessed nationally at the end of each stage of their education) gained by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 11 in English and mathematics were below those of similar groups nationally as well as their peers. Their attainment was one grade below that of their peers in both subjects. In 2012, just under half of the students supported by the pupil premium made the expected levels of progress in English between Years 7 and 11, whereas more than two thirds of other students did so. In mathematics, just over a third of the students eligible for the extra support made the expected levels of progress between Years 7 and 11, while half of other students did so. Consequently gaps in attainment widened.
- Disabled students and those needing extra help undertake vocational courses, however they make inadequate progress because they lack the necessary skills needed to progress into further education or the workplace. More recently, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making better progress because of the interventions and the support the school is providing.
- The school enters all students early for the GCSE examination in mathematics and has allowed many to improve their grades through re-entry but this has not produced high enough results overall. Numeracy skills have yet to be developed in a systematic way across all subjects. Students have too few opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills in real-life situations across the curriculum. Consequently these skills are underdeveloped.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Although the progress students make is not inadequate, results have been below the national average for several years. However, data presented by the school show that the attainment of students who are currently at the end of their first year of sixth form study is rising and is now broadly average, but the attainment of those nearing the end of their A-level courses is still generally below average.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching has not been good enough to enable students to maintain the good progress noted at the school's previous inspection. This has led to underachievement especially in English, mathematics and core science.
- In the less effective lessons the pace of learning is too slow and the work set does not challenge students of different abilities to learn or hold their attention. Sometimes expectations of students are too low and students lose concentration and stop learning. Teachers do not engage the students and fail to ask searching questions that extend their learning or check their

understanding of the work. Sometimes teachers do too much of the work for students so that they do not think things out for themselves.

- Teachers do not always make sure that activities are set at a high enough level for all. Often the work does not challenge students to learn enough to help them gain the highest National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Teachers' planning of lessons does not ensure that students supported by additional government funding, and some who are disabled or have special educational needs are able to make good or better progress.
- Teachers' questioning skills are not as effective as they should be in all classes. Too often a minority of students volunteer answers while the majority sit back and do not have to think about giving a response. Teachers do not use questions to check on students' learning in the lesson or encourage them to think about how the work might relate to their daily lives.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is variable across the school. While there is some very good practice, too much work is not looked at or lacks feedback that offers the detail needed to show students how to improve. There was little evidence to show that students had acted upon teachers' comments.
- Lessons generally reinforce students' literacy skills. Many staff plan to introduce important subject-specific words in lessons but few provide time for students to practise and use this new learning.
- Teaching in the sixth form is not good enough to help students progress as well as they should.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Students' behaviour and safety require improvement. Although it is improving, some students lose focus and concentration when work does not interest them or is not set at the right level.
- Most students are polite, respectful and want to learn. There are good work relationships between students and staff.
- School staff monitor closely all aspects of behaviour and this, combined with better support, has led to a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions. Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are improving.
- Attendance has been below the national average for the last two years, but attendance for all groups is now rising. An important factor in this improvement is a good system to check on attendance. Effective work is evident with specific families where students' persistent absence has been a concern.
- The school provides well for students with medical needs and for school refusers through the provision of the learning inclusion centre where they are taught by a specialist team until they are ready to join regular classes.
- Students report that they feel safe at school. They describe that there are few occurrences of bullying and that when they do occur students are confident that the school will sort things out. The school does not tolerate racism or homophobia. Parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey generally agree.
- Students have noted that there has been an improvement in behaviour in the last few years. Behaviour seen in the best lessons was good and students actively engaged in their own learning and supported others when working together in groups. However, some students stopped taking part fully in lessons when tasks were not well matched to their abilities and activities did not interest them. This view is reflected in comments received from parents and carers.
- Students are familiar with how to deal with the risks they might face, both within and outside the school, and understand issues relating to substance abuse and the dangers associated with the internet.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders, managers and governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to bring about the improvements that are needed in order to raise students' achievement. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and the standards of students' achievement particularly in English, mathematics and science have not been maintained. Although many in the leadership team are determined and committed to make the school successful, their actions have not had the necessary impact and students' achievement is too low.
 - The leaders' judgements of the school's performance are generous, and do not identify the full extent of its key weaknesses. Improvement plans are in place but the lack of challenge in the targets set for the past two years have meant that students have not achieved as well as they should. Low expectations and the lack of clear timescales to check what effect these plans are having mean that senior leaders have not been able to confirm the impact of their work. Current plans are better focused on improving both the quality of teaching and raising students' progress in all subjects.
 - The governing body and headteacher have established appropriate formal checking of teachers' performance, ensuring that promotions and salaries are linked to better teaching. The training of teachers is now linked to improving their practice in the classroom. The school has taken action, where possible, to resolve problems relating to leadership and teaching, but it is too early to see the impact of these changes. The good and outstanding teaching in the school is not shared enough among all teachers to support improved practice.
 - The impact middle leaders are having on students' achievement varies too much. Support for the leadership of English has resulted in a more coherent approach and improved teaching. In mathematics, weaknesses have been tackled by the appointment of a new leader and better teachers to the team, but it is too soon to see the impact of the changes in the department and this means that mathematics remains a significant area for development.
 - Because many students are not making the progress of which they are capable, the school is not demonstrating its stated commitment to equality of opportunity. Not all subject leaders monitor the progress of different groups in order to be sure that there are no significant differences in their achievement.
 - The combination of vocational and academic subjects enables students to follow courses which are increasingly appropriate to their learning needs and interests. The school has increased the number of teachers and the amount of time dedicated to the teaching of English and mathematics, but it is too early to see the full impact of these initiatives.
 - The school's positive and supportive values promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A good range of trips, including visits and enrichment activities, helps to build the students' confidence and self-esteem.
 - The school has no clear strategy for spending the pupil premium funding and there is limited evidence to track its effect on the learning of the students it is intended to support.
 - The school has not received effective support from the local authority. has led to improvements in teaching and achievement being too slow. This means that leaders lack the capacity to improve the school.
 - The governance of the school:
 - The governing body's knowledge of students' examination performance is insufficiently detailed and governors have not always been provided with enough information about students' learning and rates of progress. The governing body has not questioned or challenged leaders sufficiently about how the pupil premium is spent or the impact that it has on students' achievement. However, they have recently received more focused data from the school and so are better placed to ask more challenging questions than they have done in the past. Governors know how senior leaders are tackling underperformance and understand how effective teachers are
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rewarded and how pay progression is linked to national teaching standards. Governors with specific responsibilities usually carry these out conscientiously and take up training to help them in their governance work. However, training has not ensured that governors have the skills to understand the school's performance or the weaknesses that must be overcome if standards are to rise. Arrangements for safeguarding students meet government requirements.

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	113526
Local authority	Torquay
Inspection number	412761

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,322
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Stentiford
Headteacher	Dr Colin Kirkman
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 May 2010
Telephone number	01803 400660
Fax number	01803 323210
Email address	enquiries@westlands.torbay.sch.uk

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