

Millbrook Academy

Mill Lane, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4QF

Inspection dates

3–4 October 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		Require improvement	3
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

- Achievement is variable in a number of subjects and students are not making enough progress in mathematics.
- There is too much teaching which does not allow students to take responsibility for their own learning and which does not meet the needs of students across the range of abilities.
- While teachers' marking often provides students with feedback on how to improve work, this is not yet consistent across all departments.
- Behaviour requires improvement because there is some low-level disruption in some lessons where students are not sufficiently engaged.
- The sixth form requires improvement because a number of A-level courses do not meet students' needs and they are not making enough progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in English is good and all groups of students are making good progress in the subject. Students also achieve well in performing arts, business studies and art and design.
- There are examples of good teaching in English, performing arts, business studies and art and design.
- Senior leaders have managed significant changes well and have secured improvement in teaching, particularly in mathematics.
- Care and support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs are good and these students are making good progress.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, both in many lessons and in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 25 lessons, of which four were observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle managers, four governors, a representative from the academy trust, three groups of students and a group of parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers, including 12 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, the school's own surveys and staff surveys.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work across age and ability groups.

Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Jones

Additional Inspector

Colin Money

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Millbrook Academy is smaller than the average secondary school. It became part of the Academies Enterprise Trust in January 2012. When its predecessor school, Brockworth Enterprise School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- 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 both below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. This is additional government funding provided to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students who benefit from the government's Year 7 catch-up funding is below average.
- In the sixth form, 54 students attend full-time alternative provision on a Futsal course at Cheltenham Football Club.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy works closely with other local schools and has received support to develop middle leaders from the Academies Enterprise Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good over time, and increase the proportion which is good and outstanding, by:
 - disseminating the good practice in marking and feedback to students so that the information makes clear what they have achieved, guides them specifically on how to improve further and expects them to improve their work
 - matching work more closely to the full range of students' needs
 - providing more opportunities for students to work independently so that they can use and apply new learning for themselves
 - ensuring that behaviour is good or better in lessons by creating opportunities for students to show a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.
- Raise the levels of students' achievement, particularly in mathematics and in the sixth form, to ensure that a greater proportion make or exceed expected levels of progress.
- Improve achievement for all students in the sixth form by securing rapid improvement in the leadership and management and by ensuring courses match the needs of students more closely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Given students' starting points when they arrive at the academy, which are slightly lower than average, they have not made good enough progress in a number of subjects, including mathematics and in the sixth form.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving but there is still some way to go before it reaches national rates of progress. Evidence from the inspection and the academy's monitoring show that better teaching in mathematics is resulting in improved progress in lessons. Students are not entered early for GCSE mathematics.
- The school's data for students in the current Years 10 and 11 show that levels of progress are improving.
- Students achieve well in English. This is due to careful planning and support for all groups of students. Achievement is good in performing arts, business studies, and art and design.
- Extra support is organised for students who are not achieving their target grades. Lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and the school's own tracking data show that rates of progress for students currently in the academy are improving.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and who have English as an additional language achieve well.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well because of the high-quality support which meets their needs.
- The Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is used effectively for one-to-one tuition, booster clubs, after-school clubs, school visits and additional learning assistants. As a result, the eligible pupils are making progress in line with that of other students in English. However, their progress has not been good enough in mathematics, where they achieve on average a grade below students who do not have pupil premium funding.
- The students in the sixth form who have alternative provision on a Futsel course with Cheltenham Football Club are making good progress.
- Progress of students in the sixth form requires improvement. While students have been able to study both A-level and vocational courses, not all of these have been appropriate to their needs. There is now increased information, advice and guidance and students are being directed to courses which best meet their needs. The academy is also revising the range of courses offered.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form. Over time, teaching has not been sufficiently good to ensure that students make good progress, particularly in mathematics. While inspectors saw examples of good and elements of outstanding practice, this is not prevalent across the school and, as a result, students' progress in some lessons is limited.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not make sure that all students are able to engage with the learning. Occasionally, instructions are too complicated, which leads to confusion, and teachers are sometimes reluctant to reshape the tasks. Students are not always given enough chances to take responsibility for their learning by taking part in structured, collaborative activities.
- Too frequently, lessons are planned at one level for the entire range of abilities in the group. This results in teachers aiming work at the students of middle ability and means that the more able are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers' questioning is sometimes limited and does not

probe students' understanding or address misconceptions, nor does it encourage students to reflect on their learning.

- Students' work is marked and constructive feedback is given in a number of subjects, including English. However, this is not yet consistent in all departments. Too often, marking is irregular and does not show students how they can improve. Feedback in lessons does not always let students know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve.
- Where teaching is good or better, high-quality learning is achieved through activities which challenge all students. Teachers use skilful questioning and expect students to give reasons for their answers. In these lessons, there are high levels of engagement by students, who show a real pride in wanting to do well. Examples of this were seen during the inspection in science and performing arts, English, geography, business studies and art and design.
- Literacy is taught well across the curriculum and is a priority across the school. Good examples were seen, for example, in the use of homophones, which were discussed with students in a number of lessons, including media studies.
- There is a well-constructed programme for students who need additional help to develop their literacy skills.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to the learning for students who need additional support, including those with special educational needs. Good examples were seen where teaching assistants supported students with literacy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Students' behaviour in some lessons requires improvement. This is because the work they are given does not meet their needs and, as a result, they lose focus.
- Students' behaviour around the school is good. Students told inspectors that they have a real sense of community. They said that behaviour had improved since the academy opened.
- Arrangements for students' safety are secure. Students are aware of different forms of bullying, and know how to stay safe online. They say that bullying is rare and that school leaders deal effectively with instances which do occur.
- Students have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. A group of students have worked in the local community creating artworks in a nursing home. They have also collaborated with pupils in a primary school to organise an arts event.
- Conversations with students show that they value the school's care for their well-being. They value opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Sixth formers support younger students in tutor sessions, hear them read and act as mentors to them.
- The care of students with special educational needs is good.
- While absence, including persistent absence, is slightly above national figures, attendance is improving.
- The attendance, safety and progress of students who attend the Futsal course are monitored closely.
- Parents who were interviewed and those who completed Parent View agree that the school provides good support for their children.

The leadership and management

are good

- The Principal has provided strong leadership and together with her leadership team has managed a period of considerable change exceptionally well. During the first year of becoming an academy there was considerable reorganisation of staff. Since then, the appointments of a Vice Principal and new leaders in English, mathematics and science have strengthened the leadership. As a result, achievement in English is good and it is improving in mathematics.

- The academy's self-evaluation shows that it is focusing on the right priorities. The Principal and leadership team have put in place robust systems for improving the progress for students. They are well supported by middle managers who share the academy's vision and are very clear about their responsibilities.
- Senior leaders have taken a number of steps to ensure that achievement improves, particularly in mathematics, by focusing on improving the quality of teaching. Systems to track students' progress are now used more effectively and there is an expectation that all teachers use information on students' achievement to inform their planning.
- Staff are committed to the academy and its continued progress. The Vice Principal has made a significant contribution to an understanding among all staff of what makes effective learning. She has enlisted the support of students in working with staff to demonstrate this in lessons.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, has improved since the school became an academy. This is because the academy has focused on providing different ways of improving practice. There is a well-developed weekly programme for all staff to work together, particularly in improving feedback to students. The leadership team knows that there is more to be done to make sure that all teaching is of the same standard as that in the best lessons.
- Careful tracking of students' progress means that resources are used where they are most needed to prevent underachievement. The academy has a robust approach to performance management. Teachers are accountable for the progress of students they teach. They only receive salary increments when they meet their performance management targets.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with an increased focus on literacy across the curriculum. The academy has reviewed its provision for vocational courses and these are now offered both at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- The academy makes good use of the pupil premium. It has used the findings of research to inform its priorities. The academy has provided extra support for students who need help to make progress. It has also provided more training for teachers to improve feedback to students. The academy's self-evaluation shows that leaders recognise that this area of work needs to have even greater impact.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the academy. There were examples of high-quality provision seen in tutorials, assemblies and lessons. The academy has introduced a passport to track and reward students' engagement in activities linked to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in and out of school. These include opportunities to make a contribution to the local community, working with local primary schools, art, drama and cultural enrichment. During the inspection a group of students was working with the Everyman Theatre to prepare for a public performance.
- The academy promotes equal opportunities, tackles discrimination and fosters good relationships. This was evident in the numbers of parents from the local community who attended a recent open evening.
- The academy is drawing on support from the Academies Enterprise Trust to improve standards in mathematics. The academy collaborates with schools in the area on training for teachers. The Principal and Vice Principal have secured a considerable change in culture to focus on standards, and this is leading to improved achievement. As a result, the academy has the capacity to improve further.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement because students following A-level courses are not making enough progress. The academy has recognised this and is ensuring that students are given information about courses in other schools as well as improving provision in the sixth form at the academy.
- Off-site provision for the students at Cheltenham Football Club is suitable and promotes targeted support for students' progress and well-being. Senior leaders conduct thorough quality assurance of the provision.
- Questionnaire responses from staff were mostly positive and many commented on the high-quality support they receive from the senior leadership team.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust and meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is good. Governors are well informed about the achievement of students and the quality of teaching. They know how well the academy is performing compared with similar schools. They are providing support and challenge and know what is being done about underperformance of staff. They have made sure that robust structures are in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is linked to salary progression. They know how the additional Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is spent and evaluate the impact on the progress for the students concerned. The governing body ensures that all its statutory obligations, including for safeguarding students, are met.

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	137690
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	399891

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	590
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Harvey
Headteacher	Jan Scott
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01452 863372
Fax number	01452 862 638
Email address	contactus@millbrookacademy.org

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