

Peacehaven Community School

Greenwich Way, Peacehaven, East Sussex, BN10 8RB

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

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

- Students' attainment and achievement by the end of Key Stage 4 are not good enough, especially in English.
- Some students do not make enough progress because the work set for them is not hard enough or sufficiently matched to their needs.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that achievement is good enough by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Although improving, there is still too much variability in the quality of teaching across subjects and year groups.
- Students do not always get clear advice from teachers' marking on how they can improve.
- Not all middle leaders are sufficiently focused on checking the progress of students and the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Teachers do not always use data effectively to meet the different needs of their students.
- There are inconsistencies in promoting reading and writing across all subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, governors and her team are giving high priority to improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Because of this drive, both aspects are getting better.
- The behaviour of students is good. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to learn.
- Students' achievement in English is improving.
- The school is a safe and caring community where students feel valued and enjoy a wide range of experiences.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 part lessons, of which six were observed jointly with senior or middle leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, two groups of students, two governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 33 responses to the Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, an analysis of the school's own staff questionnaire responses and three letters from parents and carers.
- Inspectors checked a wide range of documentation including examination results, examples of students' work, the school's own information on students' attainment and progress, records of attendance and behaviour, information about safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school improvement planning and documents relating to the performance management of staff. They also evaluated the ways in which the school checks the quality of teaching and its plans for improvement.

Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila Browning	Additional Inspector
Sue Cox	Additional Inspector
Heather Ward	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher was appointed headteacher from September 2013.
- The school is an average-sized secondary school and the number on roll is rising.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is well above average.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is broadly average. This is additional government funding for children in local authority care, students known to be eligible for free school meals and those from families in the armed forces. A similar proportion of students in Year 7 are entitled to the funded catch-up programme.
- The majority of students come from White British backgrounds; very few are from minority ethnic groups. The great majority of students speak English, and very few are at early stages of learning English.
- The school operates a special resourced provision for students with speech, language and communication difficulties. There are currently 20 students attending this provision from various year groups.
- The school is working in partnership with its feeder schools to develop literacy skills.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' performance.
- The school holds the Gold Artsmark and has the embedded I Can secondary talk accreditation for the whole school and specialist accreditation for the special resource provision.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 are entered early for examinations in English and mathematics.
- The school has a programme of activities before and after school, including a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across different subjects and year groups so all teaching is consistently good, by:
 - using data more effectively to make sure that teachers match their work more closely to the different needs of their students
 - making sure that teachers' marking always provides students with clear advice about how to improve.
- Raise students' achievement in English and in other subjects by providing more opportunities to develop and transfer their reading and writing skills into other subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that all middle leaders robustly check the quality of teaching in their subjects and the progress being made by the students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with well below average reading, writing and mathematical skills. Students' achievement requires improvement because their attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4 has not risen rapidly or consistently enough since the last inspection.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics has been inconsistent but there have been recent improvements. In 2013 the number of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was average and the best in the school's history.
- Attainment in English has improved over the same period as a result of strategies used by the school to raise attainment in this subject. Attainment in mathematics has been improving steadily since the last inspection and is now high. Some subjects perform well, for example the separate sciences which are taken by a larger proportion of students than average, humanities and modern foreign languages, but the overall pattern of attainment in GCSE examinations has been, and remains, uneven.
- Students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make better progress in mathematics than in English when compared to similar schools nationally. In 2012 and 2013, the school successfully closed the gap compared to other students in the school and nationally in both English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported by the school. Their overall achievement is slightly below that of others, but students with statements of special educational needs make better progress than other students. Students attending the specialist resource provision generally achieve well. Students attending off-site alternative provision take a mixture of academic and vocational subjects. Their achievement is lower than that of other students.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make better progress than others.
- Students benefiting from the Year 7 catch-up funding make good progress.
- Many students have weak reading and writing ability and this slows their progress. The school is focusing on developing literacy skills across all subjects, and in science, for example, teaching sometimes has a focus on developing students' ability to write more detailed answers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable across subjects and year groups. There is not enough teaching which is of a consistently high standard over time, although there are recent improvements. These changes have not yet had a sustained effect on GCSE results.
- The quality of assessment and marking is inconsistent across teachers, subjects and year groups. Where marking is good, there are constructive comments by the teacher on precisely how the students may improve their work and opportunities for students to make comments about their own work and progress. Good marking was seen in mathematics and humanities. The marking policy, to which middle leaders made a large contribution, is not being followed consistently by all staff.
- When teaching is effective, teachers have high expectations for all their students and provide appropriately challenging tasks for all students, using assessment information well. The school has very good information about all its students but this is not always used effectively by all staff. Occasionally, the effectiveness of teaching assistants to support students is inconsistent.
- When teachers have lower expectations and plan less well, the teachers talk too much, the pace of learning is slower and there are fewer opportunities for students to be fully involved in their learning.

- Teachers do not always match the work to the different range of abilities in lessons. As a result, some students do not make the progress they should because the work is either too difficult or too easy.
- Students comment on the effectiveness of the extra support they receive from their teachers after school and there are examples of good additional support in some lessons.
- Teachers' questioning occasionally fails to involve all students and encourage sufficient discussion that leads to a deeper understanding of knowledge and skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good because they have positive attitudes to their learning which help them to make progress in their lessons. Students are courteous and polite to each other and to adults and visitors. Relationships are very good. Students respect each other's opinions when answering questions in lessons. The school is calm and orderly. Different year groups interact positively with each other.
- Students comment that behaviour is good.
- Good systems are in place to ensure that behaviour is managed well. As a result, students say they feel safe and they understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. They say bullying is rare and is quickly dealt with by staff.
- Parents and carers responding to the Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire report that their child feels safe and that behaviour is good.
- The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions has decreased over time as a result of improved behaviour management and the strategic use of alternative provision.
- The system of rewards is highly valued by students. Students are particularly proud of their responsibilities as anti-bullying mediators and members of the school council.
- The school develops students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Students raise money for charities and are involved in a range of community work. Older students comment that the mentor system allows them to help and support younger students.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because some students need to be more active participants in their lessons.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because recent changes introduced in the school have not brought about consistently good teaching and achievement.
- Changes in senior leadership have started to have an effect on school policies and procedures. As a result, middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed to the school's vision. Subject leaders and achievement coordinators are involved in tracking students' progress, but all are not sufficiently effective in checking progress data and the quality of teaching.
- Middle leaders comment that they are now held to greater account by senior leaders, especially by using assessment information and this, in turn, is starting to help them to manage their staff more effectively.
- The school has a key focus on students thought to be at risk of not attaining their expected grades in GCSE subjects, and has appropriate strategies in place to support these students.
- The school's policy on early entry for GCSE English and mathematics has not adversely affected outcomes for the more-able students.
- The school has a largely accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and the headteacher is committed to involving all members of the school community in planning for the future needs of the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and largely meets the need of all students but the school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum to more closely accommodate the needs of the

changing levels of ability of the students on entry to the school.

- The specialist provision for students with speech, language and communication difficulties supports students well. The school's use of alternative provision is appropriate for the needs of students and has been successful in improving their achievement and attendance.
- Students' literacy is a key priority for the school but there is not yet effective leadership and management of this across all subjects.
- Parents and carers, staff, governors and students are positive about recent improvements under the leadership of the current headteacher and about the reputation of the school and its impact on the local community.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to the school.
- The school works well with parents and carers.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, respecting differences and tackling any discrimination.

The governance of the school:

- Governors have the skills and ability to hold the school to account and to identify clear priorities. Governors have a largely accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a good understanding of the performance of the students and how this compares to the national picture. They have contributed to improvements over time, but recognise that there is more to do in terms of improving teaching and achievement, especially in English and literacy. Governors spend time in school and are linked with subjects. They have a good understanding about the impact of pupil premium funding and how it is benefiting students' progress. Governors ensure that the performance management of staff is effective and rigorous and are aware of what is being done to reward good teachers and to tackle underperformance. They ensure that effective arrangements for the safeguarding of students are in place and that resources are managed efficiently.

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	131601
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	429644

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	884
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Creasey
Headteacher	Nicky Bassett
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2011
Telephone number	01273 581100
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