

# Gamlingay Village College

Station Road, Gamlingay, Sandy, SG19 3HD

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 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		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

- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is too low.
- Girls do not always achieve as well as boys.
- Teaching is improving but there is not always enough challenge for middle-ability pupils in lessons.
- Not enough is done to develop pupils' number skills across all subjects.
- Senior leaders are not using data on pupils' attainment and progress well enough to evaluate all aspects of the academy's work. As a result, most but not all areas of weakness are identified in academy-improvement plans.
- Improvement plans do not outline a range of strategies to tackle all the academy's weaknesses, particularly in mathematics.
- The governing body's minutes of their meetings do not clearly detail the level of scrutiny governors actually provide.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have ensured that standards are rising because they have improved the quality of teaching and aspects of achievement. Initiatives to develop pupils' literacy are proving successful.
- In English, pupils currently make above the nationally expected rates of progress in reading and writing at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium outperform their classmates and eligible pupils nationally in reading and writing.
- In design and technology, music and French, pupils are making good progress because teachers have excellent subject knowledge.
- Pupils are happy, behave well and attend regularly. Pupils and parents rate the academy highly.
- The governing body is realistic in its assessment of the academy's performance and is actively working to secure further improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the head of college.
- The inspectors held meetings with the head of college, the executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, other senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 35 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and analysed the results of the staff questionnaire to which 28 replies were received.
- Inspectors reviewed the academy’s data on pupils’ progress and attainment, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the academy’s checks on how well it is doing and academy improvement plans.

## Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Cox

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than most secondary schools.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those that are looked after by the local authority and those from armed services personnel families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than average.
- Gamlingay Village College became a sponsor-led academy in February 2012 and is run by the Stratton Education Trust.
- The headteacher of Stratton Upper School acts as the executive headteacher of the academy and both schools share a governing body.
- Since September a number of new leaders have been appointed to the academy, including Key Stage 2 coordinators in numeracy and literacy, a special educational needs coordinator and a head of mathematics.
- The academy does not make use of alternative provision.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improving the quality of teaching so that overall standards continue to rise by:
  - raising attainment in mathematics to ensure that all pupils, particularly girls, attain results at least in line with national averages
  - ensuring there is enough challenge for all pupils in lessons, especially those of middle-ability
  - making sure that teachers plan opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - making sure that available data on pupils' attainment and progress are used effectively to evaluate all aspects of the academy's work and direct academy improvement plan priorities
  - ensuring that academy improvement plans identify a range of strategies to tackle areas of weakness in precise detail, particularly in mathematics
  - ensuring that the governing body's minutes clearly identify the level of challenge and scrutiny that governors provide.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in mathematics is not as high as it should be. Girls do not attain as well as boys overall and the achievement of pupils of middle ability is too low because there is not always enough challenge for these pupils in lessons.
- In mathematics, the number of Year 6 pupils making the progress expected nationally dipped sharply in 2013 and very few pupils made better progress than that typically expected. Pupils find problem-solving activities challenging and plans are in place to address this weakness, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact of these initiatives. School data indicate pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making better progress than those in Years 5 and 6, but inspectors observed slow progress in Key Stage 3 mathematics lessons during the inspection.
- Overall, standards in Key Stage 2 have risen and pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is now broadly average. Standards in literacy have improved most because teaching of these skills is consistently good. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are currently achieving well in both reading and writing. School data indicate that pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making good progress overall although in science, staffing issues have impacted on pupils' achievement in Year 8. The most-able pupils achieve well in the subject, making better progress than those of middle ability.
- The impact of Year 7 catch-up funding has not been rigorously monitored by senior leaders to determine whether this is making a difference to weaker readers. However, literacy standards are improving for all pupils.
- Additional funding to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been spent on a variety of initiatives prompted by leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity. Revision classes are provided to prepare pupils for national tests; pupils have access to musical instruments and lessons; they have electronic aids to help with reading; costs of residential study visits are met for them as necessary. As a result, in 2013 these pupils attained better results than both their classmates and eligible pupils nationally at Key Stage 2 in reading and writing. However, in mathematics, pupils eligible for the pupil premium attained no better than their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often make good progress from the strong support they receive in lessons from well-informed teaching assistants. Support programmes in reading and numeracy are improving with better leadership from the recently appointed leader of special educational needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' enjoyment, strong commitment and good achievement in a range of subjects, including French, music and design and technology, as a result of teachers' expert subject knowledge and creative teaching approaches.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it has not resulted in pupils' good achievement in mathematics.
- Teachers are working hard to develop pupils' literacy but not enough has been done to develop pupils' number skills across all subjects. In some lessons, particularly in mathematics, the pace of learning is too slow, girls do not participate actively enough and there is insufficient challenge

for pupils of middle ability. As a result, in these situations low-level disruption occurs very occasionally because pupils lose interest in their work.

- There is some good teaching where teachers make effective use of questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge. Teachers generally use data on pupils' attainment and progress well to plan activities which meet the learning needs of lower abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the most-able pupils. Good use of information and communication technology engages pupils and clarifies their understanding.
- Some examples of very strong practice were observed in music and design and technology. Pupils in these lessons are enthusiastic about their learning and are making rapid progress because teachers use practical, real-life examples which help pupils link their learning to the world outside the academy.
- Marking is good across most subjects because pupils receive clear feedback from teachers on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. Pupils are clearly taking note of this advice in the next pieces of work they complete.
- In all lessons observed by inspectors, teachers were well prepared and made sure that lessons had a clear structure and precise objectives to guide pupils' learning.
- Pupils and the majority of parents agree that appropriate homework is set.

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

- Pupils are keen to do well and are very positive about their learning. Older pupils appreciate the recent improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Attendance rates are above average because pupils are happy and get on well with staff and each other. Fixed-term exclusions are almost unknown.
- In lessons, pupils usually participate enthusiastically in activities and enjoy working collaboratively. Between lessons pupils conduct themselves sensibly so that break and lunchtimes are calm and orderly.
- Both pupils and their parents agree that the academy is a safe place. Any rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the dangers of bullying in most forms, including that based on disability and race. Nevertheless, pupils say the academy could do even more to help them understand diversity, including that based on sexual orientation.
- Pupils have the opportunity to extend their leadership skills by leading assemblies and taking on prefect, ambassador and house-captain roles. Pupils speak highly of the number of activities and sports which are available after school and participate actively.
- Behaviour is good but not outstanding because, in a small number of lessons where teaching is less effective, some low-level disruption of learning occurs. Pupils say that in these lessons teachers do not consistently apply the academy's behaviour policy.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders have not yet been successful in improving the quality of teaching in mathematics. Senior leaders do not systematically use the information available to evaluate the impact of all aspects of the academy's work on pupils' progress. As a result, academy improvement plans identify most, but not all, of the main issues which are holding the academy back.
- Improvement plans highlight the need to recruit key members of staff, but do not give precise enough details about what steps will be taken to improve attainment, particularly in mathematics. As a result, it is not easy for governors to monitor these plans effectively at regular intervals. New leaders, known as Key Stage 2 coordinators, in post from September 2013 have exciting ideas to raise standards but at this stage it is too early to gauge their impact.
- Senior leaders demonstrate they have the capacity to improve the academy further because standards overall are rising and the quality of teaching is improving. A large number of staff have recently joined the academy because senior leaders have not been afraid to take difficult decisions to secure better teaching. Newly launched policies to improve the quality of marking and assessment and initiatives to improve pupils' writing skills such as days focused on this priority have been particularly successful.
- Arrangements to manage the performance of staff have recently been revised. Rigorous systems which link to the national standards expected of teachers have been adopted to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Targets are appropriate for teachers at every stage in their careers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength, evidenced in pupils' positive interactions with each other and staff. Inspectors were impressed by pupils' considered and thought-provoking responses in group discussion, and the warm welcome they give visitors to the academy.
- Recent events to mark Remembrance Sunday have further developed links with the local community. Theatre visits and opportunities to gain an arts award are developing pupils' cultural awareness well. Pupils speak enthusiastically about fund-raising events for a variety of charities.
- Overall, the range of subjects and learning opportunities is broad and balanced. In mathematics, the programme of study is currently being revised to better meet pupils' learning needs, but it is too soon to measure the impact of the change.
- Teachers benefit from a good variety of training opportunities as a result of the academy's partnership in the Stratton Education Trust. Leaders below senior level are benefiting from these training opportunities.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - An external review of the governing body is not recommended despite the academy requiring improvement because governors are realistic in their assessment of the academy's performance and are having a positive impact on helping it to move forward. The governing body brings considerable expertise in education and business to the benefit of the academy. The Chair of the Governing Body, in particular, offers robust levels of challenge to senior leaders in weekly meetings and governors are determined that achievement and teaching quality will improve. However, governing body minutes do not clearly detail the good level of

scrutiny governors provide on all aspects of the academy's work. Governors know what the quality of teaching is and have been very much involved in the new performance-management policy for staff which outlines the academy's arrangements for the management of teachers' work, linking good teaching and salary progression. Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having on eligible pupils' performance. They are committed to supporting the academy by undertaking appropriate training to enhance their skills.

## 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>	137879
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	399898

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Madeleine Russell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Watson (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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