

Worthing High School

South Farm Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7AR.

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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

- GCSE results are improving too slowly, although current students, including those in Year 11, are making better progress than in previous years.
- A few boys with the potential to gain top grades in English, including those with an entitlement to free school meals, are not yet meeting their full potential by the time they leave in Year 11.
- Teaching, although much improved since the last inspection, still varies in quality. Some lessons fail to stimulate a curiosity for learning because tasks lack sufficient challenge and teachers' checking of individual progress is not assiduous enough.
- Teaching assistants when deployed in lessons do not support learning effectively enough.
- A few subject leaders do not have a good enough grasp of what needs to improve within their particular subject area.
- Although behaviour has improved in lessons, the conduct of a few students at change of lessons lacks self-discipline or consideration for others.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads exceptionally well. Her steely determination for all students to meet their potential, balanced by her very genuine interest in people, has secured the trust and commitment of all.
- Newly appointed senior staff and subject leaders have quickly gained the confidence of staff to critically assess what they do and work successfully to improve their effectiveness.
- Governors have set up strong systems to support leaders and teachers and call them to account for the quality of teaching and achievement in the academy. As a result, the academy is improving steadily.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved significantly because focused subject leadership has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 18 teachers, of which eight were jointly observed with senior leaders. Joint observations were also conducted with four subject leaders.
- In addition, the inspection team looked at samples of students' work in English, science, history and geography alongside subject leaders. Ten shorter visits were also made to lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with students in lessons and met with two groups of students. They also met with representatives from the governing body and school staff, including senior and other leaders. The lead inspector also met with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of 97 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding documentation, minutes of governors' meetings and records of the performance management of staff.

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Anwar	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Worgan	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Worthing High School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- There are more boys than girls. Students join the school at the start of Year 8.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and others, is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is in line with the national average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- A very small number of students are supported on courses at Northbrook College.
- The academy was last inspected in December 2012 and found to be inadequate.
- The headteacher and several senior staff and subject leaders were appointed shortly after the previous inspection.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that achievement is at least good in all subjects, especially in English by ensuring that:
 - teachers routinely check students' individual progress in lessons and adjust their teaching accordingly
 - teaching captures boys' interests in particular and motivates them to excel
 - teachers make full use of the high quality information on students' progress available to them so as to provide suitable challenge and support in lessons to all learners, especially those entitled to free school meals and the most able.
- Improve the behaviour of a few students at change of lessons and during breaks by ensuring that :
 - teachers are a visible presence during these times and expectations of students' conduct outside of lessons are clearly understood
 - all students recognise that during unsupervised time they need to exercise self-discipline and be aware of the impact of any inconsiderate behaviour on others.
- Broaden the staff training programme to include:
 - opportunities for subject leaders to strengthen their expertise in diagnosing what subject specific skills need to be strengthened in order for achievement within their subject to accelerate
 - further opportunities for teachers to learn from best practice within their own subject area and that of others.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching assistants when deployed to support learning in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because results at the end of Key Stage 4 are not yet good enough. In 2013 there were strong gains in subjects such as mathematics, modern foreign languages, geography and history, where students' progress, including that of the most able, was good. However, although GCSE results in English went up, not enough boys secured the higher grades. This meant that the overall percentage of students securing five or more good grades, including English and mathematics, remained below the national average.
- Students eligible for free school meals typically achieve less well than non-eligible students. In 2013, eligible students achieved on average one GCSE grade lower than other students in both English and mathematics. However, their current achievement is far better. For example, in Year 9, where targeted strategies to improve students' reading ages, funded through the pupil premium, have yielded strong gains of up to a year's progress in four months.
- In lessons there is evidence of good and outstanding achievement across all subjects and year groups. However, a legacy of temporarily filled vacancies in the past has created inconsistencies in teaching and gaps in some students' knowledge. Leaders are aware of this and are effectively addressing it.
- The most able students typically make better progress in mathematics than in English, where the proportion of students securing the top grades has not been good enough. Current achievement in English is better than this and is attributable to the evident improvements in teaching noted by inspectors, students and senior leaders.
- Disabled students or those who need extra help with their learning achieve in line with their peers. Some are progressing well, and better than in the past. However, inspectors observed a few instances in which support provided by additional adults in lessons did not move students forward in their learning.
- Leaders have correctly prioritised the development of students' literacy skills and to good effect. There is strong evidence in lessons across all subjects of teachers tackling literacy development effectively, for example through providing sufficient time in lessons for writing and focusing on developing students' understanding of key subject specific vocabulary.
- A very few students attend Northbrook College. Their attendance and achievement are carefully monitored. They achieve well because the courses are carefully selected to meet their specific needs.
- Students for whom English is an additional language achieve well. Support for their learning is effective and teachers show a good awareness of their needs.
- Leaders do not typically enter students early for either mathematics or English. However, in 2013, a small number of students were entered for each subject to build confidence and resilience. This strategy has proved successful with all students meeting their target grades in mathematics and almost all in English, including some of the most able students.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has strongly improved since the last inspection, when too much of it was inadequate. However, it requires improvement because inconsistency remains, resulting in some students, such as the most able boys, not meeting their full potential.
- Teachers invariably know students well and are now able to identify those in their classes with particular difficulties or who are vulnerable to underachieve. In the best lessons these students' needs are well met; teachers provide additional challenge or activities to support these students, they check their learning effectively and their progress is good. However, this is not universally the case.
- Some teachers do not monitor students' progress regularly enough in lessons. When this

happens, the pace of learning slackens and students lose interest.

- There are excellent examples of targeted and probing questioning but still too much that is accepting of basic level responses resulting in superficial learning and insufficient challenge, both for middle ability and especially the most able students.
- In some instances, use of resources and planning lack inspiration; for example, in English, where boys who met with inspectors described the teaching of 'Macbeth' as dull and repetitive.
- Students' work is regularly marked and the academy marking policy is in evidence across all subjects. Teachers provide helpful advice on how to improve and now allocate time in lessons for students to respond. This has been noted by students who feel it is helping them to do better.
- In a few instances, where teachers are temporary or have taken over a class whose teacher has left, leaders have neglected to provide sufficient or accurate enough information about how much work has been completed or how well students are progressing. In these circumstances, work is often pitched at the wrong level and is either too easy or too hard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Although behaviour in lessons has improved in line with teaching, a few students can be thoughtless during break times and at change of lessons. For example, inspectors observed litter being strewn from the top of a stairwell. Teachers were not always highly visible at these times.
- Strategies to keep students safe and secure are good. Attendance is assiduously monitored and leaders work effectively with other agencies and providers to ensure that students thrive and achieve their best.
- For example, the attendance and achievement of students with medical issues who receive home tuition are closely monitored and evaluated. A similar approach to the uptake of school lunches by students entitled to the pupil premium has resulted in a 50% increase in the numbers of those students eating lunch provided by the canteen.
- The behaviour of the very few students who attend off-site provision is good.
- Attendance is now broadly average and has improved since the last inspection. In particular, the attendance of students eligible for the pupil premium in Year 11 has improved significantly as a result of closer monitoring and interventions by leaders.
- Exclusions have reduced and students are clear that the new behaviour policy and improvements in teaching underpin these changes. They have welcomed the new behaviour strategy asserting that 'you now know where you stand'. However, despite these improvements, exclusion rates are still above the national rate and students told inspectors that some inconsistency remains.
- Students' understanding and perceptions of bullying are clear. Students are aware of the differing types of bullying that exist, such as cyber bullying, homophobic and racial discrimination, and were keen to advise inspectors that such behaviours are not tolerated. They describe the academy as 'inclusive' and 'caring'. They are confident that leaders respond promptly to any concerns. Incident records and positive responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, confirm that parents agree.
- Leaders encourage students to act as volunteers within the locality, for example by supporting voluntary agencies locally who provide support for older citizens. Students value this work and are very keen participants.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because managers and leaders have not yet succeeded in securing standards of achievement or teaching that are consistently good or better across the academy.
- Senior leaders and governors share a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses in the

academy's performance. Strategies to improve teaching and behaviour have been welcomed and recognised by students and staff.

- With skilful tenacity, the headteacher has very quickly galvanised the staff to leave the turbulent times of the past behind them and follow her direction. Her strong track record as deputy headteacher has assisted. Staff and students stand firmly behind her and already her leadership has yielded impressive improvements in aspects of achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- Systems for managing teachers' performance are exacting. Leaders routinely observe teaching and scrutinise students' work. Teachers' performance targets are linked to professional training and governors are fully involved in decisions about pay and rewards.
- Since the headteacher's appointment, several staff members have not progressed through the pay scale because their teaching is not consistently good. Teachers whose performance is weak are either helped to improve or leave the employ of the school.
- The newly appointed deputy headteacher has set up excellent information systems to enable subject and pastoral leaders to monitor students' achievement and make connections between their behaviour, attendance and the quality of the teaching they receive. Although there is evidence that these systems are already in use, it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.
- Joint observations and scrutiny of students' work conducted with inspectors affirm the accuracy of leaders' judgements. There is good evidence too that their targeted support and coaching have helped teachers to improve their practice. However, not all subject leaders have sharp enough skills in this key role.
- The academy offers a good and expanding range of academic courses which are increasingly well matched to the abilities and needs of its students. Other opportunities, such as 'period 6' (supervised time for extra study or clubs), theatre visits, opportunities to act as 'volunteers', and trips abroad provide well for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders and governors share a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all. This is expressed in many ways, but particularly in the headteacher's insistence that only good quality teachers are appointed to permanent positions.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors acknowledge that they were too inclined to accept excuses from leaders in the past and they did not keep abreast of how well the academy was performing compared to similar schools. This has changed. The governing body has undergone a full external review and has fully implemented all recommendations. Governors now employ an external consultant to provide on-going support, challenge and training. They know about the quality of teaching and achievement data in the academy and hold leaders to account for students' results. Meetings with leaders are more frequent and challenging. Although aspects of the pupil premium funding are yielding good impact, the governors expect to see improved outcomes for these students, particularly in English in the 2014 GCSE results.

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	139109
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	424295

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	12–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Cohen
Headteacher	Carolyn Dickinson
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 December 2012
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