

Uffculme School

Chapel Hill, Uffculme, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 3AG

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students make outstanding progress and achieve highly in their GCSE examinations. Results are consistently far above national averages.
- Students who receive the pupil premium, disabled students and those with special educational needs all make very good progress.
- The overwhelming majority of teaching is good or outstanding. Teachers have the highest expectations and plan lessons well to extend students' knowledge and understanding rapidly.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Students are extremely polite and have excellent attitudes to learning. They feel safe and secure in a nurturing environment.
- The school is exceptionally well led and managed, with an inspirational headteacher who has raised the quality of teaching and increased the already high levels of achievement. All staff collaborate well to produce a harmonious learning community.
- Students have many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities which help them develop into well-rounded people.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is very strong. Students care for one another and have a strong sense of social justice.
- Governors are very effective in helping the school maintain its constant focus on improvement. They have made a strong contribution to raising the quality of teaching and levels of achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons, of which 15 were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at examples of students' work and case studies. The frequency and quality of marking and written feedback were noted.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, seven governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 184 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), three letters from parents and 40 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the school's own data on students' current progress, monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Mallone, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Howard Dodd	Additional Inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional Inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Uffculme School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Uffculme School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2010. When its predecessor school, also called Uffculme School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Most students are White British. The number of students from a minority ethnic background is small and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, service children and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is low.
- Thirty students in Years 10 and 11 receive part of their educational provision at Bicton College or Exeter College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The school has recently formed a trust with its closest primary school. It is also part of a network of schools providing mutual support across several local authorities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that an even greater proportion is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers provide work which is at the right level for different groups of students and is neither too easy for some nor too hard for others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students arrive in Year 7 with broadly average levels of attainment. They do exceptionally well in their GCSE examinations across a wide range of subjects. The proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is well above the national average.
- The most able students do very well, achieving higher proportions of A* and A grades in a range of subjects than is found nationally.
- Rates of progress in English and mathematics are far above national averages. The school's data for current students show that these rates are increasing and that students are expected to achieve even more highly in future.
- The school enters the most able students early for their GCSE examinations in mathematics. This enables them to take higher qualifications at the end of Year 11.
- Progress is good for those students who are disabled or have special educational needs. In 2013, these students achieved better GCSE results than most students nationally.
- There is a gap in the attainment of students who are in receipt of the pupil premium and other students. In 2013, these students were about one third of a grade behind their classmates in their GCSE English examinations. In mathematics, this gap was over a grade. Students currently in the school are doing better, so that the rates of progress for pupil premium students are faster than for others in English and almost identical in mathematics. In both subjects, students make more progress than most students nationally.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve at least as well as their peers.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to provide extra support for those who join the school at below the expected standard in English and mathematics. By the end of the year, most have reached the levels that are expected of them.
- Those students who receive part of their education at Exeter College are well catered for. They make excellent progress and thrive on the more vocational courses that they follow. Their progress, attendance and behaviour are closely monitored by the school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The overwhelming majority of teaching is good or outstanding.
- Teachers have very strong subject knowledge and use this well to plan lessons which stimulate and challenge students to extend their knowledge and skills and think for themselves. They make good use of a variety of resources. For example, in a Year 10 physics lesson, students watched video clips of an egg being thrown and caught without breaking and of people jumping from buildings without hurting themselves to help them understand how changes in momentum can be brought about.
- Teachers generally use their knowledge of students' needs and abilities to help them tailor work that is at the appropriate level of difficulty. This helps students make rapid progress. Some students make less rapid progress when a few teachers do not match work closely enough to their different levels of ability.
- Teachers frequently question students very well during lessons so that they can judge their understanding and adjust their lessons accordingly. As a result, students maintain their engagement in learning and make rapid progress. Strong relationships help teachers bring out the best in their students.
- Students are able to gain deeper understanding of concepts and consolidate their knowledge, for example, at times when they work in pairs and small groups.
- Teachers regularly set homework which helps consolidate and extend students' knowledge, skills and understanding. The quality of marking is good. Teachers regularly assess students' work and

give students guidance on how to improve it. Students respond well to this guidance which supports their progress. Presentation in books is good; students take pride in their work.

- Teachers enable students to learn very well. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson, students took part in a role play based around trading in cocoa beans used to produce chocolate. This helped to deepen their understanding of the concept of fair trade by enabling them to see the trading situation from different points of view.
- Students are able to assess their own and others' learning which helps them know how well they are doing. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, students were asked to check the work of others to see whether they had included connectives of time in a piece of chronological writing. This heightened their awareness of what is required in this kind of writing.
- The deployment of highly qualified teaching assistants is good. They skilfully question students to help them understand new concepts and make progress.
- All teachers monitor the progress of pupil premium students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. There are individualised support programmes in place for these students which ensure that they make as good or better progress than their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Students consistently display excellent attitudes to learning. They are keen to participate in lessons and very supportive of one another when working in pairs or small groups. They are very proud of their achievements and take every opportunity to win the badges which celebrate how well they have done.
- Students' behaviour around the school is exemplary. Students are extremely polite to one another and to adults. Although corridors in some parts of the school are narrow, they move around quickly and sensibly without fuss so that they arrive promptly at their lessons.
- Students show great respect for the school environment; there is no litter or graffiti. The attractive art work which lines the narrow corridors is undamaged despite the large numbers of people moving past it.
- Staff manage behaviour exceptionally well by providing stimulating lessons which engage students' interest. The emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour and achievement means that incidents of misbehaviour are rare. When they do occur, they are quickly reported and followed up effectively.
- Students are encouraged to take on responsibilities, for example by joining the school council or by becoming a reading mentor for younger students.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students feel safe at all times and know well how to keep themselves safe outside of school and when online. There is very little bullying in the school. When it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Incidents of racist or homophobic name calling are rare.
- Attendance is very high and compares very favourably with similar schools. The number of students excluded is low, and declining further, as a result of the very effective support given to students whose circumstances render them more vulnerable. Permanent exclusion is extremely rare.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She has an exceptionally acute understanding of the strengths and needs of the school. She has succeeded in maintaining and building upon high standards of achievement by creating a strong sense of pride and common purpose amongst staff and students.
 - Subject leaders are strongly committed to raising attainment and use rigorous checking systems
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very well to ensure that class teachers accelerate the progress of all students.

- The school's self-evaluation is extremely sharp and perceptive. The correct areas for improvement have been identified and very clear plans ensure that progress continues to be made, especially by students in receipt of the pupil premium. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the way the school teaches and cares for their children; they thoroughly recommend it to others. Students enjoy and are very proud of their school.
 - The school uses the performance management system well to provide training matched to teachers' needs and the needs of the school. Leaders have designed training to support weaker areas of teaching. For example, a recent initiative has resulted in many teachers varying their approaches for specific students so they can make faster progress.
 - The broad and balanced curriculum meets students' needs. It is academic in the main; the most able students can study extra subjects, while more practical and vocational options are available for others. Advice helps students choose appropriate courses, both for their GCSEs and when leaving school. The curriculum contributes to excellent behaviour and high standards of achievement. Thanks to the effective guidance they receive, last year all Year 11 leavers continued their education or went on to training or employment.
 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is very strong. Their interest in, and respect for, people of all faiths is fostered through religious education. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. This is encouraged in subjects such as geography and history, where moral dilemmas allow students to see things from others' points of view. Almost all students take part in the many opportunities on offer outside of lessons. These include sporting and musical activities (including this term's production of *Les Miserables*), trips to theatres and galleries, the Duke of Edinburgh's award, reading challenges and overseas exchanges.
 - The school is effective in promoting equal opportunities. Students of all backgrounds cooperate well. There is no evidence of discrimination.
 - The school works very effectively to improve standards of literacy. Many initiatives are particularly targeted at those who might struggle with reading; these include workshops with visiting authors, trips to literary festivals and reading competitions. As a result, many students continue to read for pleasure throughout their time at school.
 - Leaders show a good capacity to improve. Recent training for teachers on learning habits is already bearing fruit in the classroom. The relentless focus on vulnerable groups has seen their achievement match and exceed that of national averages for all students.
 - Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly effective. They bring a wide range of expertise well matched to the needs of the job. They are proud of the school's many achievements, but unremitting in their desire to see it do still better. They question and challenge the school's leaders, whether over the quality of teaching, standards of achievement (including of vulnerable groups) or the value for money of a new building project. They are responsible for the headteacher's performance management and rigorously oversee the performance management of other staff and of any rewards for good teaching. They know how the pupil premium money is being spent and work closely with the business manager to ensure that finances are effectively deployed. Governors receive regular training, including on safeguarding.
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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	136287
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	441256

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	971
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Carman
Headteacher	Lorraine Heath
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01884 840458
Fax number	01884 841570
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