

# Bridgwater College Academy

Parkway, Bridgwater, TA6 4QY

**Inspection dates** 15–16 May 2014

| <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:

- The progress students make as they move through the academy has not been fast enough across all key stages.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is below average.
- Achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not good enough to enable pupils to make expected progress.
- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is not high enough.
- Not all leaders understand how to use nationally prepared information about pupils' progress. As a result they do not plan effectively for improvement.
- Some teachers do not use marking effectively enough to enable students to improve their work.
- While governors are hard working and enthusiastic some do not have enough knowledge and experience to make an impact.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Senior leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching, which has led to better progress for current students.
- In the nursery, children play and learn in a caring and secure environment that values them all.
- The achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium has improved.
- Behaviour around the academy is good and students say they feel safe.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 49 lessons, of which 30 were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of visits to tutorial sessions and carried out short visits to classrooms across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They also met with various groups of students.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, and statistical information about students' progress, achievement, behaviour and exclusions. They looked at the work of a wide range of students.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation relating to the management of the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, lesson observations, and arrangements for the safeguarding of students and for governance.
- Inspectors took into account the 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 60 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

|                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Christine Young, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Roger Pope                      | Additional Inspector |
| Teresa Hill                     | Additional Inspector |
| Duncan Millard                  | Additional Inspector |
| Joanna Pike                     | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bridgwater College Academy converted to become an all-through academy for students aged three to 16 in September 2012. The academy sponsor is Bridgwater College.
- Its predecessor schools were: East Bridgwater Community School, which was previously inspected by Ofsted in March 2011 and was judged to be satisfactory; Sedgemoor Manor Junior School, previously inspected by Ofsted in March 2011 when it was judged to be satisfactory; and Sedgemoor Infant and Nursery School, which was previously inspected in May 2012 and judged to be good.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional money allocated by the government for looked after children, those eligible for free school meals and students with a parent or carer in the armed services.)
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above the national average, as is the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A small number of students attend off-site vocational training provision at Bridgwater College.
- The school enters students early for GCSE examinations.

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

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
  - consistently giving students clear guidance on how to improve their work in their marking and other feedback
  - providing more challenging tasks and having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in Key Stage 2
  - ensuring the most able pupils are consistently given work that challenges and interests them
  - sharing the existing good and outstanding practice effectively across the academy.
- Raise achievement and progress across the academy by ensuring that:
  - all teachers use information about how well students are doing to plan lessons which enable all to achieve their very best.
- Improve the leadership and management by:
  - providing subject and aspect leaders with appropriate training to broaden their knowledge and understanding of effective leadership
  - enabling subject and aspect leaders to take responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress of students in their specific areas
  - providing an external review of the work of the governing body.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children join the academy in Reception with skills in communication, literacy and mathematics which are much lower than the levels expected for their age.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because the quality of provision is too varied. As a result children make too little progress, particularly in early reading activities.
- Too few pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress over time. This is because there is too much variation in the quality of teaching and too little is expected of them.
- Achievement in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Current information indicates that attainment in mathematics has improved this year and is likely to be similar to last year's average. However, attainment in reading and writing is likely to be below the levels expected.
- GCSE results are not good enough, especially in English. In 2013, the percentage of students who achieved five or more GCSE grades including English and mathematics was below average. However, current academy assessment information shows that the situation is likely to improve this year.
- In Key Stage 3, students are making better progress towards their targets because of increased support and improved use of tracking to help teachers plan more accurately.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to provide good support for any students in Year 7 who find reading difficult. As a result, these students are making good progress in improving their literacy skills.
- The school's literacy programme is beginning to be established across the academy but this has not yet had enough time to have made an impact on students' progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive well-targeted additional support from teachers and teaching assistants, including small-group and one-to-one teaching. As a result they make good progress and their achievement is good.
- Those supported through the pupil premium make particularly good progress. The academy has used the funding well to support the achievement of these students and has successfully narrowed the gap between the attainment of this group and other students. In Key Stage 4, they are approximately one GCSE grade behind their classmates in both English and mathematics.
- Scrutiny of work and lesson observations confirm that students are now beginning to make better progress in English in Key Stage 4. They are working at levels close to those expected for their age. Students' attitudes to learning are good.
- The primary school sports funding has provided pupils with opportunities to participate in sporting activities that help them to develop healthy lifestyles and develop their physical well-being.
- The academy enters a small number of students early in Year 10 for GCSE chemistry. This practice will not continue after this year.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision outside the academy at Bridgwater Academy. They are successful and achieve well. These students have developed greater confidence and self-esteem through raising their aspirations and focusing on preparations for future life.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too varied across the academy. Although some is good and outstanding, too much still requires improvement.
- Not enough marking leads to students having an accurate understanding of how well they are working and what they need to do to improve. Some teachers do not give students enough good quality guidance.
- In some lessons, work is too easy or repetitive and does not build on what students have learnt previously. In particular, more-able students are not given sufficiently challenging activities and this results in them not achieving their potential.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together to provide additional support that is matched to students' abilities. This ensures that students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, make progress.
- In lessons where students of all abilities were challenged to achieve their best, work was interesting and teachers had high expectations of what students could do. In these lessons, students relished the opportunities to take part. For example, in a Year 8 art lesson, the teacher guided students carefully through techniques to create accurate interpretations of a still life drawing of animal skulls.
- Some teachers know their subjects and their students well. As a result, they are able to use appropriate strategies to help students think more deeply and come up with their own ideas and answers to problems. This was clearly evident in a Year 11 science lesson where the teacher reinforced students' understanding of examination criteria through debate and discussion.
- Many students commented on how much the teachers give, how supportive they are and what a difference their commitment and high aspirations are making to their achievement.

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

- The behaviour of students is good, and they have excellent relationships with the staff. This makes the school a very pleasant and purposeful place in which to learn. Attitudes to learning are good but are not yet outstanding. Students develop resilience, drive and confidence.
- Students are good ambassadors of their school. They are calm, polite and courteous, both in the classroom and around school. They are well meaning, inquisitive and fun to talk to. Students are proud of their school and the atmosphere is one of respect, sharing and learning together.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and well supported by the nurturing ethos in the school. Key Stage 4 students take on extra roles of responsibility and make a very positive contribution to the life of the school by supporting younger students.
- Students' enjoyment of school makes a significant contribution to the behaviour shown. It also makes a positive contribution to their moral and social development. Their excellent punctuality to lessons reflects their enthusiasm for their school and their learning.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is very good.
- Students say they feel safe. They understand risk and have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that there is very little bullying in school and express great confidence that should any occur it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Students take great pride in their school and demonstrate that they have a very clear and moral sense of what is right and wrong. The vast majority of staff who returned the questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good. This is also the view of the parents and carers on Parent View.
- There are well-monitored procedures for ensuring the good behaviour and safety of those

students who attend off-site provision.

## The leadership and management

## require improvement

- Most subject and aspect leaders along with some governors do not have enough knowledge and experience to enable them to monitor accurately and consequently plan effectively to raise achievement. However, all leaders have high expectations and ambition for the academy.
- The leadership is working towards creating a cohesive approach to management across all key stages in the academy. This is beginning to have an impact on the development of planning to raise levels of achievement.
- The school's senior leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. They, and a few subject leaders, are making good use of information to judge how well the school is doing.
- Senior leaders have been quick to implement the changes needed to address previous weaknesses in the quality of leadership and teaching, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2. Changes in staffing, combined with a clear direction for the development of teaching and learning, are already beginning to have a positive impact and pupils' progress is improving.
- The school has introduced a robust performance management system for teachers, which is accurate and clearly identifies the skills that need to improve. The professional development programme is supported well by the school. There is a strong focus on the development of subject leaders and improving teaching especially through the 'Learning Innovators Project'.
- Additional funding is well targeted to improve students' learning. Learning mentors provide support and coaching. The school supports students in a variety of ways, including small-group work, individual teaching, support with trips and outings, and support for school equipment.
- Students' benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including sports, music, drama, art, and opportunities which greatly enhance their leadership and learning skills. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment.
- The school has developed good partnerships with parents and carers. Much is being done to engage with parents and carers through regular updates on students' progress, newsletters and through the academy's website. The majority of parents and carers who responded on Parent View said that they would recommend the school to other parents and carers.
- The academy has developed many partnerships with local business and commerce and this has enabled the academy to broaden the opportunities available for students and to support staff development programmes.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. The staff are well trained and have a good awareness of child protection and risk assessment issues. The school is keen to promote equality of opportunity and discrimination of any kind is eliminated.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body takes an active role in the life of the school. The training that governors have received in key areas of the school's work has enabled them to hold it to account for its performance. For example, they are able to interpret the national information about the academy's performance. This enables them to hold the headteacher to account for students' achievement and progress. By visiting lessons and talking to students and teachers, the governors keep abreast of the quality of teaching and how well the academy is doing. They understand the links between pupils' progress and teachers' progression through the pay scales. Governors understand the pupil premium funding and are informed as to how it is used to improve the performance of those eligible. Nevertheless, some governors do not have sufficient knowledge or experience to have a positive impact on ensuring the academy makes more progress in improving students' achievement and progress. It is recommended that the

academy undertakes an external review of governance, in order to assess how well this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## 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> | 138375   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Somerset |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 440025   |

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

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Academy converter              |
| <b>School category</b>                     | All-through academy            |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–16                           |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                          |
| <b>Delete space</b>                        |                                |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 1,246                          |
| <b>Delete space</b>                        |                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body             |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Carole Chevalley               |
| <b>Executive Headteacher</b>               | Peter Elliott                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 15–16 May 2014                 |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01278 727327                   |
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