

Crispin School Academy

Church Road, Street, Somerset, BA16 0AD

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has implemented well the priorities for improvement identified at the last inspection. There have been notable improvements in systems to identify and support students who are in danger of underachieving as well as those relating to behaviour and safety.
- Senior leaders, together with governors and staff, are leading the school forward with determination and common purpose.
- The school's latest data on the academic progress of students indicate improvement in overall attainment measures.
- The progress made by students eligible for pupil premium funding indicates significant improvement in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and sometimes better, which leads to strong progress made by most students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted.
- The behaviour of students is good overall, and often better. The students have positive attitudes to learning. The school has developed effective systems to record incidents of poor behaviour and bullying, analyse these thoroughly and target support.
- There has been effective work on eliminating inappropriate and, particularly, homophobic language.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive highly personalised support. This contributes well to their academic and personal progress and is appreciated by parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The gap in attainment between students eligible for the pupil premium and all other students has not narrowed sufficiently in English and particularly mathematics. The achievement of lower ability students is not as strong as for other ability groups.
- There remains a small amount of less effective teaching.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback to students within and across subjects.
- The role of middle leaders is inconsistent in driving improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the teaching in 30 lessons, of which 10 were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with students, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and five governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject heads of department and the special educational needs coordinator. An inspector also monitored the reading of some Year 8 students. In addition, a telephone discussion was held with a consultant who has been working with the school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of information, including data on students' achievement, planning and monitoring documentation used by teachers to check on how well the school is doing, minutes of a range of meetings including the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding. Students' books were also scrutinised.
- An analysis was made of the 127 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. Together with this, the 282 responses to a survey of parents undertaken by the school in the spring term 2014 were considered. Sixty-seven questionnaire responses from staff were analysed.
- The school was last inspected in 2013 and found to require improvement. It has been monitored by Ofsted since its last inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Pyner, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Diana Choulerton

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Baker

Additional Inspector

Kaye Palmer-Greene

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly larger than the average sized secondary school and most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of students with greater learning needs and those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Crispin School supports a local academy, St. Dunstan's School, with an executive headteacher leading both schools. There is an executive board which oversees the work of both schools but each has its own governing body. A deputy headteacher from Crispin School has been seconded to lead St. Dunstan's. This has led to some changes within the senior leadership team at Crispin School.
- Seventeen teachers joined the academy in September 2013, some newly qualified.
- Alternative provision is provided at Strode College, Bridgwater College, Glastonbury Medical Tuition Unit, Millfield School, Forest School, Cannington 14–16 Centre, The Redbrick Building and a number of local businesses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of lower ability groups, including those with special educational needs, and students entitled to the pupil premium by focusing on targeted support programmes based on regular reviews of progress.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - using the most effective teachers as role models and coaches to improve the consistency of teaching across the school
 - developing the quality of marking and feedback to students so that there is a more consistent approach across and within subjects and ensure that this is monitored rigorously
 - improve the consistency of lesson planning so that all groups of learners, but particularly lower ability students, always have appropriately challenging work
- Develop the role of middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, in improving teaching and learning through more consistent checks of planning, teaching, marking and feedback and students' responses to it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From broadly average starting points students make good progress overall to reach standards that are generally above average. The latest validated results for 2013 show that the proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics was significantly above the national average. School data and inspection evidence indicate that this positive achievement is likely to improve further this year.
- The work in students' books, teaching and learning observed and scrutiny of the school's latest progress data all indicate that students are generally making good progress towards their challenging targets.
- The school has developed more refined and focused intervention strategies based on regular assessment of students' progress. For example, work to improve the outcomes for English following the 2013 results has resulted in the progress of all groups of students improving, but particularly for students who are eligible for the pupil premium. A similar pattern of improvement is seen in mathematics.
- As a result of this improved intervention and support focused on literacy and numeracy, the gap in attainment between those eligible for the pupil premium and other students has narrowed significantly. The latest data for this year indicates that the gap is around two-thirds of a GCSE grade in English and about one grade in mathematics.
- However, there remains some variation in the progress made by groups of students. High and middle ability groups make good progress overall, especially in mathematics. Lower ability groups and students with special educational needs make clear progress but this is not as strong as for the other groups.
- Outcomes at GCSE grades A*–C for a wide range of subjects are generally above national averages, some significantly so. Results for subjects are analysed and improvements planned and implemented. For example, school data for this year indicates significantly better results in French following changes to the curriculum to enable longer periods of study for students. Other subjects with strong outcomes include science, design and technology, and art; food technology has a weaker profile.
- The progress of students receiving alternative provision is generally good. Students are closely monitored and courses tailored to meet individuals' needs effectively, particularly in terms of work-related and personal development training.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good, with some that is outstanding. This is reflected in the good progress that students make. A small amount of weaker teaching remains which the school has not yet eliminated.
- The school has developed a good range of in-service programmes for teachers over the last year and this has supported the relatively large number of teachers who joined the school in September, as well as longer serving staff. Work has focused on developing higher expectations and better questioning of students together with improving their engagement in lessons.
- Generally, teachers use effective questioning to assess students' understanding of the lesson objectives. Students respond to this well, are encouraged to share their work with partners and are confident to talk through their thinking and understanding. Planning is good overall, with clear indications of the objectives of lessons and assessment opportunities. Where teaching is weaker, it is often because the work for lower ability students does not challenge them effectively. When this is the case, the progress for this group slows.
- In many lessons, students' work is assessed regularly with some examples of detailed feedback and guidance. In some lessons, students are encouraged to respond to the marking. Where this is evident, students make increased progress and they could explain how the guidance improved

their understanding. However, overall, the quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent within and across subjects and this sometimes negatively affects the progress students are able to make.

- Rigorous and regular assessment across the school, target setting and reviews of students' progress help to ensure that staff can identify and respond quickly to any students that are at risk of underachieving. The mathematics department is piloting a programme where students have a 'flightpath' showing their progress towards their Year 11 target. When speaking to inspectors, students could discuss their target and their performance in recent assessments. However, the use of these assessment sheets is inconsistent, which means that the initiative does not have the full impact intended.
- The development of intervention programmes has helped teachers to increase the support for students eligible for additional funding, those with special educational needs and lower ability groups. However, despite clear improvements in the achievement for these groups, this work is yet to show a sustained long-term impact.
- Students who attend alternative provision have their progress monitored by senior leaders to ensure the quality of their teaching and learning is appropriate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. It is not outstanding because parents, staff and students are not unreservedly positive about behaviour. Most students are courteous, take pride in their appearance, are well prepared for lessons and behave equally well in classes and around the school. The school is a calm and orderly community.
- Most staff and the large majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires agree that behaviour is good and well managed. School surveys also reinforce these positive parental views. Almost all of the large number of students who talked to inspectors spoke of the improvement in behaviour and the focus on the elimination of inappropriate language and bullying of any kind.
- There has been a great deal of work over the last year on developing students' understanding of all kinds of bullying and the use of inappropriate language. This has focused on raising understanding of homophobic attitudes through the Zee Tee project but has also included cyber and racist bullying. The school has worked very well with the charity Stonewall and has gained a national award from the Bullying Intervention Group in recognition of its work. All the students spoken to knew that using the word 'gay' inappropriately was not acceptable and said that staff were vigilant in enforcing this. As a result of this work, the number of recorded incidents of bullying has reduced significantly.
- All incidents of poor behaviour, and particularly bullying, are tracked and analysed assiduously. There are regular monitoring of records and logs by a named governor who discusses trends and profiles with senior staff. This ensures that leaders are held to account for behaviour management and improvement strategies.
- Over the last year, the school has developed its pastoral support to coordinate this more effectively with records of academic progress for students. As a result, staff have a better understanding of students' academic progress across all subjects linked with any welfare issues. This provides a stronger all-round profile for individual students and enables appropriate and focused support of all kinds to be deployed swiftly.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students and their parents share this view and point to effective procedures that have been established to ensure students are safe in the school and at alternative provision placements.
- The more coordinated approach to support students has resulted in a reduction in exclusions this year, and particularly for the number of students with special educational needs. Exclusions for this group have reduced significantly. Attendance has improved and is now better than average. Particularly noteworthy is the improvement in the attendance of those students who hitherto had poor records in attending the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has effectively led the senior leaders in working on the areas for improvement specified at the last inspection. He is passionate about providing the best possible education for the students and will not shirk from making difficult decisions. He has created a strong culture of improvement, which was evident in the staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- The academy's self-evaluation is accurate and development planning is comprehensive with clear monitoring and evaluation procedures to identify any refinements required. The increased number of senior leaders has enabled a specific focus for improvement in a range of areas. For example, leadership on improving teaching and learning by named senior leaders has enabled a targeted programme to be developed and implemented. As a result, school records show that the proportion of good and better teaching has increased.
- Middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, are positive about their role in developing provision and raising standards. They know that, rightly, they need to be held to account for the quality of teaching and standards in their subjects. However, there are inconsistencies in the monitoring by middle leaders of teaching, marking and feedback and scrutiny of work. The evidence for this was seen in the variability in the quality of teaching and marking and feedback for students within subjects.
- The Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the school's surveys confirm that parents are supportive of, and confident in, its work.
- Checks on teaching quality are rigorous and there is evidence that leaders reward effective performance and also robustly hold staff to account where there is evidence of underperformance. This has included blocking staff from progressing up the pay ladder.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' needs and a suitable choice of options is available. A traditional range of courses is supplemented by more vocational opportunities and specialist and alternative provision. The support, advice and guidance that students receive ensure that generally they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. Students also benefit from a range of visits, visitors and additional experiences which raise their aspirations, and confidence. This promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- Throughout the last year, the school has used effectively a range of external consultants and organisations to good effect to improve behaviour and safety, teaching and learning.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Effective systems for the safe recruitment of staff are in place and risk assessment systems are clear.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led. Governors are committed to their roles and discharge their statutory duties effectively. They have rightly focused their efforts on meeting the recommendations from the previous report and particularly improving behaviour and safety. The governor responsible for this aspect has been rigorous in monitoring progress and holding senior leaders to account. Governors have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. They monitor the data on students' outcomes, the quality of teaching and teachers' performance rigorously. Governors' expertise in key areas and other skills from outside education are used well to challenge senior and middle leaders and hold them to account. They are aware of the impact additional funding is having on raising standards, particularly for students eligible for the pupil premium, and the importance of improving the achievement of this group and others in danger of underperforming.

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	136913
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	442493

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	1040
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Bartlett
Headteacher	Paul James
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 June 2013
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