

St Aldhelm's Academy

Herbert Avenue, Poole, BH12 4HS

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The academy's performance has declined substantially since the previous inspection. Leaders and managers have been too slow in dealing with weaknesses in teaching and students' achievement.
- Achievement is inadequate. Students do not make the progress they should and fail to reach the standards they are capable of by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Attainment is very low when compared with schools nationally and is not improving.
- Teaching is inadequate because teachers' expectations of what students are capable of achieving are not high enough.
- Teaching does not stretch or challenge the most able students to reach their potential.
- Students do not receive consistent feedback on how to improve their work. Written work is not always marked.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently well developed.
- The curriculum, including in the sixth form, is not broad and balanced and does not meet the needs of students.
- Assessment information is not accurate. Teachers and leaders do not use the information well enough to help plan work or to monitor students' progress.
- Behaviour is inadequate because of students' poor attitudes to learning and their lack of self-discipline.
- Attendance is below average and fixed-term exclusions are too high.
- The sixth form provision is inadequate. The progress of sixth-form students is inadequate. Students are not well prepared for their next steps in education or work.
- Until very recently, the governing body and leaders at all levels have not demonstrated the capacity to raise standards across the academy.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed interim principal and senior leaders know what needs to be done to improve the academy and have begun to implement plans for improvement.
- Bullying is rare and students feel safe and well looked after while at the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 25 lessons, of which nine were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors carried out short visits to classrooms and observed a range of subjects being taught. They also made a number of visits to registration sessions and assemblies.
- Discussions were held with the interim principal, senior and middle leaders and a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. The inspectors also met with various groups of students.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including: the academy's checks on how well it is doing; the academy improvement plan; statistical information about students' achievement, behaviour and exclusions. The inspection team looked at the work of a wide range of students.
- Inspectors looked at the academy's documentation relating to: the management of the work of staff; training arrangements for teachers and other staff; lesson observations; arrangements for the safeguarding of students; and governance.
- Inspectors took into account took account of 11 written responses from parents to the online Parent View survey, and a telephone conversation with a parent. They also considered the responses of 33 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Clarke	Additional Inspector
David Howley	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- St Aldhelm's Academy is a smaller-than-average secondary school. There are currently 20 students on roll in the sixth form. The smaller than average sixth form offers three vocational courses at Level 2.
- One of the academy's previous sponsors has withdrawn and the other one does not wish to continue its present sponsorship. The Department for Education is actively seeking a new sponsor.
- An interim principal was appointed in May 2014. A new vice-principal and other senior leaders, including a new leader of the sixth form joined the academy in September 2014.
- An independent improvement partner has recently been appointed to support senior leaders in assessing the academy's performance.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students for whom the pupil premium provides support is above average. This is additional money allocated by the government for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals. Most students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported is above the national average.
- The academy does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Alternative provision for students with behavioural needs is provided on site in 'The Harbour'.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy received an unannounced monitoring visit from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in February 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, so that students make at least good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of all students and set challenging targets for the progress students should make, especially in English, mathematics and science
 - disabled students and those with special educational needs, those who are at risk of underachieving and the most able are provided with effective support and challenge, including through homework
 - teachers' marking and feedback consistently enables students to improve the quality of their work
 - accurate assessment information is used well across all year groups to plan work that matches the learning needs of different groups of students
 - teaching focuses closely on raising standards of literacy and developing mathematical skills
 - the arrangements for teaching classes in the open plan areas are improved.
- Raise students' achievement throughout the academy, particularly in English, mathematics and science, so that standards are at least in line with national averages by:
 - rigorously checking that all students are making at least expected rates of progress, especially students supported through the pupil premium, disabled students, those who have special educational needs and the most able
 - ensuring that all additional adults helping students in lessons support learning effectively.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - increasing the rigour with which leaders, including those responsible for subjects, check on the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that judgements on the quality of teaching are linked closely to students' achievement and take account of the most up-to-date information on students' progress
 - implementing a robust, structured programme of support for individual teachers to enable them to improve the quality of their teaching
 - ensuring leaders at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities and are accountable for their actions
 - ensuring that the curriculum is fit-for-purpose so that all students can achieve well, including in the sixth form.

- Improve students' behaviour by:
 - setting clear expectations for students' behaviour and conduct, and ensuring that all staff consistently follow the academy's behaviour management policy
 - ensuring that all students engage fully in learning in lessons
 - reducing the number of students who are temporarily excluded from learning.

- Improve sixth-form provision by:
 - providing well-planned and well managed individual study programmes
 - securing effective contribution of partners and employers in the arrangements for future employability
 - ensuring that all sixth-form students are placed on courses that match their levels of ability.

- Improve the attendance of those students who do not attend regularly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not demonstrated the capacity for further improvement. None of the areas for improvement set out in the previous inspection report have been tackled successfully.
- Leadership roles and responsibilities are not clearly understood, resulting in a lack of accountability. The interim principal and members of the revised leadership team have not been in post long enough to have made a significant positive difference to school improvement.
- Students' achievement is not improving. Assessment information is not accurate and is not used consistently to ensure that students make at least the progress expected compared with all students nationally.
- Leaders have not made enough difference to improving teaching, students' progress or attendance, including in the alternative provision, since the previous inspection. Many management systems are new or have yet to be implemented. As a result, the systems are not having any impact on moving the academy forward.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium funding make inadequate progress because leaders have not made sure that it is used effectively.
- The academy's arrangements to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching are weak. Procedures to ensure that teachers meet performance targets are not in place. At present, there is no effective system to link how well teachers perform with decisions about their pay progression. There is also no coherent programme of training for teachers and leaders in place.
- Middle leaders are inexperienced and lack the ability to gauge the quality of teaching and the achievement of all groups of students effectively.
- The curriculum does not enable students to achieve at least the expected rates of progress. Students are not sufficiently prepared for the opportunities and experiences of life in modern Britain. The curriculum is not fit-for-purpose because the impact it has on pupils' academic and personal progress is too limited.
- The sixth form curriculum does not satisfy the 16 to 19 study programme requirements because not all students can access courses in GCSE English and mathematics.
- The academy's self-evaluation accurately assesses that leadership and management, achievement and quality of teaching are inadequate.
- The academy does not take effective action to ensure that all students including the most able, disabled students and those with special educational needs are given equal opportunities to reach their potential.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- It is too early to measure the difference that the newly appointed school improvement partner is making.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors are in agreement that the academy's leadership and management, teaching and achievement are inadequate. Governors have been too slow to recognise these significant weaknesses. They have not assured themselves of the accuracy and quality of the assessment process, and have, therefore, not understood how the weaknesses have adversely affected students' achievement. Those students affected include those supported through the pupil premium, disabled students and those with special educational needs, and the most able.
- Governors do not ensure that pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve the success they are capable of. This is because they have been too slow to test the impact of the school's work in this area.
- Governors have not contributed to improving teaching by checking the effectiveness of procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The link between the management of staff performance, staff appraisal and salary progression has not been effectively developed.
- Governors are now working with the interim principal to secure a new academy sponsor and a permanent principal to lead the academy forward. As a result, governors are beginning to have a clearer vision for the academy's development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students, including those attending the alternative provision, is inadequate. Students' poor attitudes to learning do not enable them to make good progress.
- The areas for improvement in behaviour, identified in a recent monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, have not been addressed. Not all staff challenge students' poor behaviour, inappropriate language and swearing.
- Students who spoke to inspectors rightly identified that teachers do not use the behaviour management system consistently. This shortcoming, combined with too much weak teaching, results in some lessons which are disorderly and where learning is significantly disrupted.
- Parental and staff perceptions that behaviour is having a negative impact on students' overall achievement are in line with inspection findings. Students were keen to report that their lessons are disrupted regularly.
- Students' absence rates are above the average, especially for disabled students, those who have special educational needs and students who are eligible for free school meals. However, the proportion of students who are persistently absent is falling.
- Fixed-term exclusions rates are too high. The rates are above the average as they were at the time of the previous inspection.
- Typically, up to five classes are taught at the same time in one of several large classrooms. Students explained that they found it difficult to concentrate because noise levels were too high and this resulted in poor behaviour that disrupted lessons and hindered their progress.
- Work in students' exercise books is untidy and messy. Students do not take pride in their work and achievements. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of students in terms of the quality of work they produce.
- Students and staff look after the premises well. The academy is free from litter. Students follow the academy's expectations with regard to school uniform.
- The academy's house system is successful in enabling students to co-operate well with each other and to develop leadership qualities through taking on roles of responsibility.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- The prevalence of poor behaviour and high rates of exclusion in the academy compromise students' ability to learn in a safe environment.
- Students say that they feel very safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They have a very clear understanding of the different forms of bullying, including e-safety, and report that bullying is rare. When any instances of bullying occur, students report that incidents are resolved quickly.
- Risk assessments are up to date and the safety of students both on and off the academy site is monitored closely.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Inadequate teaching over time means that too many students make inadequate progress. Too often, teachers' expectations of what students should achieve are too low.
- In too many lessons, teachers do not use the information they have about students to plan suitable work for the different abilities they teach. This leads to students developing poor attitudes to learning as the work set does not engage and challenge them enough.
- Teachers do not check students' learning routinely in lessons. Teachers do not adapt work sufficiently to meet the needs of different groups. This slows the learning for several groups of students, especially the most able, those who have special educational needs, students supported by the pupil premium, low attaining students and those who are struggling to keep up.
- Within lessons, additional adults are not always briefed or deployed well. Consequently, they do not support learning effectively or take a lead and correct incidents of students' inappropriate behaviour.
- Teachers do not set homework regularly. Tasks for the most able are not always challenging enough.
- The teaching of mathematics is not closely matched to the needs of disabled students, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged students, and the most able. These groups of students are making inadequate progress.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed consistently across different subjects. However, the academy is beginning to tackle weaknesses in reading. The Year 7 catch-up funding provides for small group work,

which is improving the reading skills of younger students. The funding is used to introduce a special reading programme across the academy with time specifically dedicated for students and staff to read together.

- The quality of marking is not good enough to help students improve their work. Too much work is unmarked or just ticked with a brief comment that does not make clear what the student needs to do next. Although there is some detailed marking that shows students how to improve, this is not applied consistently across the academy.
- The quality of teaching for students attending the alternative provision unit is inadequate because the work provided does not match students' needs. The qualifications that they take are not at an appropriate level.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Too many students underachieve, including those who attend the alternative provision. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C, including English and mathematics has been well below the national average for the last three years.
- Current academy information shows that in 2014 only 17 per cent of students achieved five or more GCSE passes A* to C, including English and mathematics. Students' achievement in science is significantly below average.
- In 2013 the proportion of students making the progress expected in English and mathematics was significantly below the national average. In 2013, disadvantaged Year 11 students made less progress than other students in the academy and much less progress than other students nationally in both English and mathematics.
- In 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 11 students in mathematics, was about one and a half GCSE grades behind their classmates. In English, Year 11 achievement was similar to other students. However, when compared with all other students nationally, disadvantaged students were about three grades behind in both subjects. The attainment gap has narrowed in English, but it has widened significantly in mathematics. The progress of the current Year 11 students receiving this additional pupil premium funding is significantly below average.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress compared with similar students nationally. In 2013, the progress that this group of students in Year 11 had made was significantly below the average. Inspection evidence confirms that current students with special educational needs are making inadequate progress from their different starting points.
- The 2013 results for the most able students show that they made slower progress than is typical nationally, especially in mathematics and English. Teachers' low expectations and the lack of challenge have resulted in below average progress being made by these students.
- The academy does not enter students early for GCSE. The small number of students who attend alternative provision in the on-site unit 'The Harbour' do not always follow courses that are suitably challenging and as a result they make inadequate progress.

The sixth form provision is inadequate

- The effectiveness of the sixth form is inadequate.
- The academy's leaders have not secured effective provision for all students in the sixth form. The arrangements for academic and personal tutoring are not established, or effective. Arrangements for teaching GCSE courses in English and mathematics to students who have not achieved a grade C or above are not fully in place. Some students have yet to begin their studies.
- Students' studying English and mathematics at Level 2 are not achieving well enough. Their progress is too slow because too much of the teaching is not good enough. Consequently, students do not achieve their potential.
- The present curriculum is not broad and balanced. It does not ensure students are well prepared for employment, apprenticeships or to continue in education. The actions being taken by the newly appointed sixth form leader are beginning to improve opportunities for the students. But the pace of change is too slow.
- Students spoke positively about recent improvements in relationships between themselves and staff. They say that they have benefited from the improved teaching and individual support that has been introduced recently and are more confident about the progress they are making. The impact has yet to be seen in students' achievement.
- Students have a good understanding of risk and well-being. Students act as good role models and take on responsibilities in the house system.

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	136206
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	449060

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	469
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Moore
Interim Principal	Monica Cross
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 October 2012
Telephone number	01202 732500
Fax number	01202 739009
Email address	office@staldhelmsacademy.org

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