

Suffolk New Academy

Mallard Way, Ipswich, IP2 9LR

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students' progress is inadequate, especially in mathematics.
- Standards achieved by students leaving Year 11 have declined significantly in 2014 and were very low.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of students' work or behaviour.
- Students are not helped to understand how well they are doing or how to improve their work.
- The curriculum does not equip students with the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and communication that are needed to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Students' behaviour is inadequate. Low-level disruption by students in many lessons is not always challenged or tackled by teachers.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have a clear and accurate view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses, so have not taken action to improve teaching or raise achievement.
- The governing body has not held the academy's leaders to account. Governors are not always provided with clear responses to their questions and have been too optimistic about the performance of the school.
- The academy does not communicate effectively with parents. Parents have lost confidence in the academy, particularly in its leadership and management and the quality of the teaching.
- The systems for managing teachers' pay and performance are ineffective.
- The pupil premium funds have not been used effectively to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- Attendance is low overall, particularly in Year 11. Too many students are regularly absent.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed Co-Principals and other senior leaders have already taken decisive action to improve standards and a number of initiatives have been put in place. These are appropriate, but it is too early to see what impact they are having.
- Work in students' books shows that standards and progress in English are improving.
- Students are making better progress in art and design and drama, where standards are rising.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 34 lessons across the academy. Three joint observations were undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited several classrooms to review students' work. On two such visits they were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors examined information about current students' learning and progress, as well as information about their progress in the year 2013/14. The inspectors also looked at current work in students' books.
- Meetings were held with the Co-Principals, members of the senior leadership team, the subject leaders of English and mathematics and other subject leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors and the Chief Executive of the New Academies Trust, who is the Principal of Suffolk New College, the sponsor of Suffolk New Academy. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- A meeting was held with a group of students with a wide range of abilities. In addition, inspectors took many opportunities to talk to students in classes, at breaks and at lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the academy's development plan for 2014/15, and a self-evaluation summary from September 2014. Recent reviews were also examined; one focused on leadership and management within the academy and one focused on what the academy is doing well and what it needs to do to improve.
- The inspectors scrutinised records of attendance and behaviour, as well as information about the performance of staff.
- The inspectors took account of the 32 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and another communication from a parent.
- Inspectors also took account of the 54 responses from members of staff to a staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kate Griffin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Godfrey Bancroft	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Richard Owen	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

- Suffolk New Academy became an Academy on 3 February 2013. When its predecessor school, Chantry High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- Suffolk New Academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The Principal resigned at the end of October 2014 and the Deputy Principal left at the same time. Two Co-Principals are leading the academy on an interim basis.
- Nearly half the students are supported through the pupil premium, which is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- Most students are of White British heritage. A few students speak English as an additional language and the number of these students is increasing.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special education needs is almost half of the academy's roll, which is well above the national average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A number of students study part-time at Suffolk New College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate students' progress, particularly of the most able students, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of how much students can achieve, how well they should present their work and their standards of behaviour, especially in mathematics
 - focusing more closely on helping students to acquire and use the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy, and ensuring that these skills are taught in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - marking students' work in such a way that they are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve it.
- Revise the curriculum in order to:
 - there is sufficient time allocated for the core subjects of English and mathematics
 - provide a curriculum that builds upon students' prior knowledge and skills, especially in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the behaviour and attendance of students by:
 - eradicating poor behaviour in lessons to ensure that students' opportunities to learn are not compromised through noisy and persistent disruption
 - all staff challenging poor behaviour around the academy and dealing with it according to the academy's agreed procedures
 - developing systems to encourage good attendance.
- Revise the performance management programme within the academy to ensure that all teachers have clear targets that relate to the success of their students so that they can be held to account for their students' achievement.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing robust systems for reviewing and evaluating the quality of teaching and students' achievement to provide leaders with a clear and accurate picture of the academy's effectiveness
 - using the results of these evaluations to draw up sharply focused plans for improvement.
- Communicate more effectively with parents and take action to restore their confidence in the academy.
- Make more effective use of the pupil premium funds to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students.

An external review of governance, including 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

- The academy's leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to improve its performance. Leadership at all levels, including governance, has been ineffective in ensuring that the quality of teaching is good enough to prevent many students from underachieving.
- Leaders' evaluation of the academy's performance is too generous. It does not provide the governing body or the senior leadership team with a clear picture of the weaknesses in achievement, behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. Very recent changes in leadership have resulted in a more accurate evaluation and plans are now being implemented to improve the outcomes for students. However, it is too early to assess the impact of these changes.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to secure the improvements needed in the achievement, attendance and behaviour of disadvantaged students. Not enough has been done to measure the impact of this funding on students' achievement.
- The school's curriculum is ineffective in raising achievement. It does not enable students to make sufficient progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills so as to be well prepared for the next stage in their education, or for employment or training. The time allotted to different subjects does not take account of the need for improvement in the core subjects, particularly in Key Stage 4 and, given their attainment on entry, Year 7.
- Performance management systems are inadequate. Teachers have been moved up the pay scale automatically rather than receiving pay increases through successfully meeting their targets. The academy's view of teachers' performance is too generous and does not take into account the slow progress made by the students.
- There is wide variation in the effectiveness of middle leaders, including subject leaders, and it is inadequate overall. Many subject leaders are not holding the teachers in their department to account for the quality of teaching or the performance of their students.
- Communication with parents is weak. As a result parents lack confidence in the academy's leadership and management. Two thirds of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire would not recommend this academy to others. For example one parent wrote 'Communication between the school and the parents needs to improve. There is a distinct lack of meetings arranged by the school between itself and the parents.'
- Senior leaders do not communicate effectively with staff. In particular, subject leaders said that they were uncertain whether they should have provided realistic predictions for the examination results at the end of Year 11 in 2014 or whether they should give their estimate of the best results possible. This confusion contributed to the low results reported this summer being a surprise to many.
- Many members of staff, and governors, have been frustrated at the lack of progress in the past and they are very optimistic about the changes proposed by the interim Co-Principals.
- It was reported by the Chief Executive of Suffolk New College that the students studying there for one day a week were making good progress and that they attended and behaved well. However, no records were available in the academy to support this view.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and any issues are addressed in an effective way. Child protection arrangements are fit for purpose. Security around the building site is good.
- Following the unsatisfactory results this summer the New Academies Trust received a pre-warning notice letter from the Regional Schools Commissioner in October 2014 requesting an action plan to address the concerns. This has been completed by the Co-Principals and has been accepted.

- The Trust has commissioned an external risk assessment and an audit to ensure that the academy is financially secure. It is aware that the progress and attainment of the students are not as they should be and is seeking to appoint an external adviser in addition to the two Co-Principals.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is underdeveloped. The school has taken action to ensure that students are better prepared for life in modern Britain. Topics such as the tackling of discrimination are now being taught in PHSE lessons and tutorial time. Plans are in place to ensure that similar topics are covered in other subjects.
- The students welcome the extra-curricular activities on offer and talk positively about the trips they have experienced and the opportunities that they have had to take part in academy productions.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity and the variation in the performance of different groups of students is not large.
- Careers guidance is given at appropriate times and valued by the students. Students are given helpful information, particularly when choosing their subjects to study at GCSE. There is detailed guidance about option choices on the academy's website.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - Governance has not been effective in bringing about the necessary improvements. Leaders have not been held to account well enough for the underachievement of students and the poor performance of teachers.
 - Governors have relied too much on the information given by the Principal and have not provided sufficient challenge to senior staff about students' achievement, the quality of teaching, performance management and the impact of the academy's development plan.
 - Governors are not sufficiently involved in the self-evaluation processes of the academy. They have little awareness of how teachers' performance is managed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Attendance is low and there is too much misbehaviour. During the inspection, for example, students outside classrooms banged on windows intentionally disturbing the activities inside.
- Attendance since the start of the current school year has been above average in Years 7 and 8 because the academy's actions to improve attendance have been effective in those year groups. However, attendance is below average in Years 9, 10 and 11 and not enough has been done to improve it. The proportion of persistent absentees is below average in Year 7 but above average in Years 8 to 11. Overall attendance is below average.
- Students' lack of engagement and the persistent low-level disruption of learning in a significant number of lessons results in disorderly classrooms and stops other students making the progress that they should. For example in a mathematics lesson students ignored the instructions of the teacher and wandered around the classroom to talk to other students. Their actions, not stopped by the teacher, prevented others learning.
- When teaching engages students in challenging and interesting activities they behave well and follow the instructions of their teachers. In a year 10 art lesson students were refining their ideas by experimenting and selecting appropriate resources and worked responsibly and enthusiastically.

- Over 60% of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire felt that the academy does not ensure that the students behave well. About 60% of the staff who responded to the questionnaire do not agree that students' behaviour is good. Students themselves feel that behaviour is poor and, when asked 'What you would improve in the academy, if you could?', they said, 'The bullying'.
- The majority of students are polite and well mannered. The Chief Executive of Suffolk New College, where some students study for one day a week, said that the students behaved well when at the college.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- The students say that they feel safe in the academy and this view is confirmed by the parents. However, students reported that there is a lot of bullying and this is confirmed in the academy's records. Students also reported that low-level bullying, such as name-calling, is ignored, although they said teachers took effective action when major instances of bullying occurred.
- Students understand the different types of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. In discussion they demonstrated care and concern for those who were affected by such bullying and understood the effect it would have.
- The academy's pastoral staff are committed to ensuring that all students, particularly those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are well supported. Their expectations are not consistent, however, which is confusing for the students.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching, students make inadequate progress.
- Teachers do not always set targets for students that are sufficiently challenging, or communicate targets in a way that makes clear to students what they should aim for. The academy has adopted a system of coloured ladders which describe the standards expected for each student. Most students could tell inspectors which ladder they were on but were unable to explain what each ladder meant.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of students' work are too low. As a result, students' presentation of their work varies greatly, both within and between subjects. Inaccurate, incomplete or poorly presented work is not always commented upon. When poor work is identified, teachers often do not follow this up to make sure that their comments have been acted upon.
- The progress students are making is not assessed consistently or accurately and there are too few opportunities for students to engage in dialogue with their teachers about their learning and progress.
- Students do not always make the progress they are capable of because they are often set work that does not stretch them or deepen their understanding. Teachers tend to focus on making sure that students have carried out a set task, rather than checking what they have learnt.
- Questioning does not always provoke thinking or discussion, and the lack of challenge in many of the tasks set does not support learning, in particular for the most-able students. All students, of whatever ability, are frequently asked to complete the same task.
- Too often teachers do not challenge poor behaviour and students ignore instructions, shout out, and put little thought into what they are doing. Other students complain that their learning is hampered by this behaviour.

- The use of teaching assistants varies across the academy. Teachers do not always make it clear to teaching assistants what is required of them. Nevertheless, some teaching assistants are very capable and skilled at simplifying work into small steps and, as a result, improve the learning of the students they support.
- Students respond well, are willing to contribute and are keen to learn when interesting tasks or presentations capture their imagination.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is consistently below average. They leave with standards that are well below average, having made inadequate progress. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics declined from 40% in 2013 to 24% in 2014.
- The proportion of students making the expected progress is improving but it remains below average. The proportion of students making more than the expected progress is well below that found nationally.
- The most-able students do not make the progress that they should. They are not given challenging enough work because, in most subjects, their teachers' expectations of them are too low. The slow progress of students who enter the academy with the highest standards causes considerable concern.
- The academy is unable to provide clear or accurate data about the progress of students throughout the academy. This is because progress has been set against targets that were unrealistically optimistic and there is no internal moderation of the quality of students' work.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs underachieve. Teachers' identify these students in lesson plans but the lack of accurate data on their progress means that interventions have not been targeted precisely enough to help them learn effectively.
- Many students do not acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills to the expected level. This, combined with weak speaking and listening skills, is a major barrier to improving students' progress.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged students has not been targeted precisely enough to meet the needs of those students for whom it was intended and the gaps between their achievement and that of other similar students nationally have not been eradicated. In 2013, the academy's data indicate that disadvantaged students were half a grade behind other students in English and in mathematics. The academy does not have sufficiently robust data on the attainment of current students in this group for an evaluation of their attainment in 2014 compared with other students.
- In English the proportions of disadvantaged students making the expected progress (about half) and making more than the expected progress (about one in ten) are the same as for other students in the academy. In mathematics only half the disadvantaged students make the expected progress, compared with three fifths of other students. Slightly fewer disadvantaged students make more than the expected progress compared with other students.
- The academy has a rising proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and students who speak English as an additional language. Most of these students settle in quickly and speak positively about the academy. An analysis of their work showed that they are making good progress. The very small group who have completed Year 11 achieved well.
- Work in students' books shows that standards and rates of progress in English are improving. However, standards in mathematics are much lower and students' progress is inadequate. In mathematics the setting arrangements are not effective and students in the lower groups are not sufficiently challenged.

- Students perform increasingly well in art and design, drama and PE. This is because the teachers' expectations are clear, the use of key subject-specific language is encouraged and there is effective use of praise.

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	138373
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	447819

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	648
Appropriate authority	Select
Chair	Chris Bushby
Principal	Shelagh Potter and Kenneth Jones (Interim Principals)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01473 687181
Fax number	01473 602693
Email address	admin@suffolknewacademy.org.uk

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