

Sarum Academy

Westwood Road, Salisbury, SP2 9HS

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not yet good. In some lessons, the work provided does not support the learning of all students. Teaching is not sharp enough to enable students to think more deeply and learn more effectively.
- The quality of marking varies. Students do not always receive the advice they need on how to improve their work.
- Some groups of students, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make the progress they are capable of in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. As a result, students' attainment is lower than it should be.
- The progress that students make varies between subjects. For example, in 2014, Year 11 students made strong progress in humanities subjects but not in sciences.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not yet ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough to be good. Strategies that have been introduced have not yet led to sustained improvement.
- Some teachers with subject responsibilities have not fully developed the skills needed to raise standards. They do not all contribute enough to the checking of standards and planning for the future.
- Some governors do not display a deep enough understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal, well supported by the academy's other senior leaders, has introduced initiatives that are leading to better teaching.
- Students currently on roll are making better progress and their attainment is improving.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress from their starting points.
- Behaviour is good and students feel safe in all parts of the academy.
- There is strong provision for promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in preparing them for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students learning in parts of 22 lessons, three of them jointly with members of the academy’s senior leadership team. They also visited several tutor groups.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and carried out two detailed scrutinies of their written work in several subjects.
- An inspector listened to some younger students read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of students to hear their views on learning and behaviour in the academy. They also spoke informally with students during their breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, other staff with leadership responsibilities, three members of the governing body and the Director of Education for Salisbury Diocese.
- Inspectors examined a variety of school documents. These included records of current students’ progress, self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, reports from an external adviser, and behaviour and attendance logs. Inspectors also examined the governing body minutes and records relating to safeguarding and the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 66 members of staff, 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and responses to the academy’s own recent parental survey.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Miriam

Additional Inspector

Hayley Follett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sarum Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy's main sponsor is the Church of England Salisbury Diocese, working in partnership with Bath Spa University, Bryanston School and Wiltshire local authority.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, is above average. These students are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding, is above average. This funding is for students who did not achieve the expected standards in reading or mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- A small number of students spend part of their time following courses at other educational providers. The alternative provision includes Wiltshire College and Riverbourne Community farm.
- There have been a large number of changes in staffing since the previous inspection.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the academy by ensuring that all teachers:
 - Provide activities in all lessons support the learning of students of all abilities and give them opportunities to think for themselves
 - help students think more deeply about their learning as well as checking their understanding
 - provide marking and feedback sharply focused on ensuring that students fully understand what they need to do to progress
 - ensure that students respond more fully to the feedback provided.
- Raise attainment and improve progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 by ensuring that:
 - all students make good progress in English and mathematics, whatever their starting points
 - disadvantaged students make more rapid progress
 - students make the best possible progress in all their subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all teachers with subject responsibilities develop the skills needed to raise standards in their subject areas
 - governors develop a deeper understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is not yet good and, consequently, students are not making enough progress. Initiatives introduced since the previous inspection have not had a sustained impact on raising standards.
- The Principal has strengthened the senior leadership team and, together, they are leading significant improvements across the academy. They have begun to raise students' achievement, showing the ability to improve the school further.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly and well-planned training is provided for all teachers. However, these programmes have not yet led to consistently good teaching. The many changes in staffing since the previous inspection have made sustained improvement in teaching more challenging.
- Students' behaviour and attendance are managed well. Leaders ensure that the academy's systems for managing behaviour are followed consistently so that students' behaviour is good. Attendance is monitored closely and firm actions are taken to improve attendance when this is necessary.
- The effectiveness of teachers with subject responsibilities is too variable to lead to consistently good achievement. Some do not demonstrate the skills needed to check standards accurately and then use their results to plan well for the future. At the time of the inspection, there was no permanent subject leader for English but the academy's principal sponsor had engaged two experienced consultants to lead improvement in this subject.
- The academy's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is thorough and accurate. Improvement plans are detailed and show clear priorities for further improvements in teaching and achievement.
- The academy's system for managing staff performance is well organised and rigorous. Teachers receive pay increases only when merited by sustained good performance. The system is beginning to show impact in raising standards.
- The variety of subjects taught is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the academy's students. Provision for younger students is varied according to their abilities and in Key Stage 4 there is a good balance between GCSE courses and high-quality work-related qualifications. The academy's leaders are planning how to maintain this broad provision in the future and are reviewing assessment arrangements in the light of recent changes to the National Curriculum.
- High-quality careers education and guidance is introduced from Year 9 so that students can make well-informed choices about their future pathways. Many enrichment activities are provided, including activities in music, drama and a wide variety of sports.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well, both through the curriculum and the general life of the academy. There are many opportunities for reflection and for celebrating achievements. Students learn how to show respect for those with different faiths and beliefs and develop a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. The British values of free speech, democracy and respect are actively promoted through assemblies and class events.
- The academy makes good use of the pupil premium funding. Small class sizes and individual support are leading to improving achievement of eligible students currently on roll. Funding has also been used to work closely with families to improve students' attendance and to ensure that all disadvantaged students are able to participate fully in enrichment activities such as educational visits.
- The Principal and the governing body ensure that the academy rejects all forms of discrimination, fosters good relationships and promotes equality of opportunity strongly. There is a high priority on promoting students' personal development and an emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect prepares students well for life in modern Britain.
- All safeguarding requirements are fully met and the academy's arrangements for keeping students safe are effective. Leaders check regularly that students who receive off-site provision attend regularly and that there are no concerns about their welfare or behaviour. This ensures that all students are well cared for.
- Several sponsors, including the local authority, support the academy. The principal sponsor, the Church of England, is taking a strong role in raising achievement. They are also helping the governors ensure that senior leaders are more accountable for the performance of the academy. The local authority has provided advice on teaching and learning as well as support in making staff appointments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, an external review of governance has been carried out. An effective committee structure is in place and governors fulfil all their statutory requirements. Governors now challenge the Principal and other school leaders. For example, they have enquired deeply into the 2014 Year 11 examination results. Through visits to classrooms and discussions with subject leaders,

governors have increased their understanding of the quality of teaching across the academy. Some governors have developed an understanding of how well the various groups of students are progressing and of some of the published performance information on the academy. However, other governors do not yet have a deep enough understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses so their own impact on raising standards has been limited. Currently, they are not clear enough on planning for the future when smaller year groups will move through the academy.

- Governors understand the importance of improving teachers' performance and have been involved in tackling areas of underperformance. They work with the Principal to ensure that teachers' pay increases are linked to their success in raising achievement. Governors manage finances well. They understand how the additional funding is spent but are not clear on its effects on achievement. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students understand and fully support the academy's behaviour code, and the systems of rewards and sanctions. They report that behaviour is usually good and that the rare incidents of poor behaviour that hinder their learning are dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Students show pride in their academy and wear their uniforms smartly. There is very little litter and no signs of graffiti. Students are well prepared for their lessons and settle quickly to their work, so very little learning time is lost.
- In almost all lessons, students concentrate well, showing positive attitudes and a desire to learn, even when their teaching is less than inspiring. They persevere even when finding their work difficult.
- Occasionally, when teaching does not engage their interest, students participate less well. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Students move calmly around the academy. Behaviour at break times and change of lessons is almost always orderly and good-natured. Students show courtesy to each other and to adults.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions has fallen year-on-year and is now broadly average. The decrease is because the academy has developed effective systems for managing students' behaviour and works closely with parents. Students who have behavioural problems benefit from individual support programmes and evidence shows that these programmes are successful.
- Students' attendance has improved. It is now in line with the national average and is improving further.
- In their responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), a small minority of parents did not consider that behaviour was well managed in the academy. Students did not agree with this view and no evidence to support it was found during the inspection.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students of all ages say they feel safe and secure in lessons and in all parts of the academy site.
- The identities of all visitors to the academy are checked carefully to ensure that their visits are appropriate. Detailed assessments of risk are made for activities both within and outside the academy.
- The curriculum supports students in learning how to stay safe. They have a good understanding of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites.
- Some students do not show a clear enough understanding of how to avoid all unsafe situations outside the academy so safety is not outstanding.
- Students reported that bullying is rare and that when it occurs staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Students are aware of the different forms bullying can take, including racist and cyber bullying, and how to respond to them.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. It is not consistently good enough across the academy to ensure that students make the best possible progress from their starting points. The quality of teaching varies between subjects and between year groups.
- The teaching of literacy and mathematics is not yet strong enough to demonstrate a sustained impact on

raising standards in these areas.

- Where learning is more effective, teachers provide a variety of engaging activities for their students and ensure that no time is wasted. They check students' understanding frequently, for instance, using questioning skilfully to make sure that all students are making good progress. This good practice is not yet demonstrated enough across the academy.
- On some occasions, the same work is set for all students, regardless of their abilities and starting points. This means that the work is then too easy or too difficult for some students and leads to a lack of interest. This limits students' progress because they become frustrated.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly. However, marking does not always provide sufficient guidance on how well students are doing and how to improve their work. Also, some teachers do not check to see if students have acted on the advice given.
- The academy has identified that many students join Year 7 with weak literacy skills and that this hinders their progress. Several strategies are now in place to support literacy, such as frequent reading sessions led by all staff. However, coherent programmes to improve extended writing are not yet consistent across different subjects.
- Relationships between students and staff are mostly strong and supportive. Students appreciate the additional time that their teachers give them if they fall behind with their work or need extra advice.
- The academy checks the quality of teaching provided for any students who attend off-site provision. These students benefit from effective teaching in their courses, including in English and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because not enough students make good progress in both English and mathematics from their starting points. In particular, students who join the academy with average levels of attainment in these subjects do not make enough progress.
- Students join Year 7 with average levels of attainment that are significantly lower than those seen in other similar schools. From 2012 to 2013, the proportion of Year 11 students who gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics increased and was beginning to approach the national average. In 2014, however, this proportion fell markedly to well below average.
- Achievement between groups of students is too variable. In 2013, girls achieved much better than boys. In 2014, boys' performance improved greatly but girls did less well. The academy's analysis shows that these year-on-year changes are caused by small differences in the effectiveness of subject provision.
- The progress that students make varies between subjects. In 2014, Year 11 students showed good progress in humanities subjects but not in sciences and modern foreign languages.
- The academy has reacted quickly to their disappointing 2014 examination results and has introduced more rigorous systems of checking progress and providing students with targeted support. Inspection evidence, including a scrutiny of work in students' books, shows that achievement is improving and those current students from Year 7 to Year 11 are now making the progress expected of them. The academy's projections suggest that in 2015 there will be large improvements in external examination results at the end of Year 11.
- The small proportion of most-able students make progress in line with similar students nationally. The proportion gaining the highest GCSE grades is lower than the national average. The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs from their starting points is similar to that of other students.
- Disadvantaged students do not make enough progress, particularly in English and mathematics. From 2012 to 2013, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and their peers narrowed considerably, but in 2014 they increased. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 11 students in English was about half a grade below that of their peers but one grade below that of other students nationally. In mathematics, these attainment gaps were one and a half and two grades. Initiatives introduced with younger students are proving effective in raising the achievement of disadvantaged students currently on roll.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is used well to fund small groups in literacy and numeracy. As a result, the students in these groups are making good progress and catching up with their peers.
- Previously, all students were entered early for their GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. There is no evidence that this policy lowered achievement of any groups of students.
- Students who attend off-site provision gain valuable qualifications in work-related subjects as well as in English and mathematics.

The sixth form provision**is good**

- The sixth form is improving rapidly. Provision and achievement are now good.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The director of sixth form, working with other school leaders, ensures that the progress of all students towards challenging targets is checked regularly. When needed, extra support is then provided promptly. Leaders also ensure that staff share good practice on sixth form teaching. As a result, standards of teaching and achievement are now better in the sixth form than in the rest of the academy.
- Many students join the sixth form with GCSE results that are lower than seen in other sixth forms nationally. By the end of Year 13, students' attainment is now average and progress measures are mainly in line with national values. The achievement of students following almost all A-level courses is good and students achieve highly in all work-related courses. There is no difference between the rates of progress made by disadvantaged students and their peers.
- The academy provides a good range of level 3 courses that meet the needs of its post-16 students. Provision consists of about one third A levels and two thirds high-quality work-related courses. This programme is well planned, building on students' achievements lower down the academy and providing clear routes for further progression. An increasing number of Year 13 students now join prestigious universities.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and is leading to very successful learning. Teachers provide a high level of challenge for students of all abilities, including the most-able students. Sixth form lessons are characterised by questions that cause students to think deeply about their learning.
- Students who have not already gained a GCSE grade C in English or mathematics benefit from skilled teaching so their success rates are above average.
- The behaviour of sixth form students is good and they agree that the academy's provision for ensuring their safety is also good. Students display mature good manners and act as good role models for younger students. All members of the sixth form contribute to the local community and many support younger students in the academy.
- Leaders ensure that sixth form students receive fair and thorough careers education and guidance so that they are well prepared for the future. This is part of the students' personal development programme.
- The sixth form is not outstanding because some students do not make rapid progress throughout their time in the sixth form.
- The academy meets the 16–19 interim minimum standards.

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	136183
Local authority	Non-maintained
Inspection number	453436

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Chancellor Edward Probert
Principal	Ruth Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 February 2013
Telephone number	01722 323431
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