

The Mountbatten School

Whitenap Lane, Romsey, SO51 5SY

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders are committed to ensuring that every student makes good progress. They know what needs to improve further.
- Leaders, including governors, recognised that results in Year 11, in 2014, were disappointing. They have acted quickly and put in place a wide range of measures to rectify this.
- Attainment is improving rapidly due to recent changes. Students generally achieve well in the large majority of subjects.
- Teaching is mainly good, with some aspects outstanding. Some of this outstanding practice is increasingly shared across the academy. Teachers benefit from regular training provided by middle leaders. A few have received additional well-focused support from external advisers.
- Students who fell behind with their reading in primary schools are successfully helped to catch up.
- The academy's innovative programme in Year 7, known as STAR, has an extremely positive impact on a small group of students and helps them make rapid progress.
- Students study a full and imaginative curriculum. It has particular strengths in science, music and performing arts.
- The behaviour of students around the school and in a large majority of lessons is good. Very few students are excluded. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- The academy makes a strong contribution to the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The influence of Earl Mountbatten is clear and leads to students understanding well fundamental British values.
- Students benefit from a wide array of extra-curricular activities, including many music ensembles and team-based sports. Students from the academy are set to participate in this year's Montreux Jazz Festival.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is strong.
- Pastoral care is extremely impressive so that the vast majority of students thrive. Those facing intense personal challenges are supported effectively to reduce the impact on their studies.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not always apply lessons learned rigorously or swiftly enough from outstanding practice in the academy or schools elsewhere. They do not compare standards in the academy regularly to work in other schools.
- Students do not always receive specific enough written guidance which helps them improve their work.
- In 2014, not all lower attaining students were able to study an English literature qualification which showed they had made good progress in English overall.
- In 2014, results in mathematics were not good compared to schools nationally.
- The downward trend in GCSE results has only been reversed in the current academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 52 parts of lessons, of which 10 were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, teachers, a group of middle leaders and representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors examined a range of the academy’s documentation including its self-evaluation summary, a development plan and minutes of the meetings of the governing body. Each inspector looked at a wide array of information about students’ attainment and progress.
- Inspectors met with three groups of students and considered their views.
- One of the inspectors held a telephone conversation with the academy’s partner education providers.
- Inspectors considered 88 responses to a confidential staff survey.
- The lead inspector met with a group of seven parents and took into account the 166 responses to Ofsted’s online survey (Parent View). The lead inspector also reviewed from parents one letter, one email and notes of a telephone call received by the inspection service provider.

Inspection team

Dr Simon Hughes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Janet Simms

Additional Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- The Mountbatten School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2011. When its predecessor school, The Mountbatten School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The Mountbatten School is a much-larger-than-average secondary school.
- The large majority of its students are of White British heritage with English as their first language.
- The academy serves a dispersed community with below average levels of deprivation.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is well below average.
- A small number of students every year are educated off site at the academy's alternative education providers: AEC and Eastleigh College.
- The academy charges for a range of outreach activities to other schools locally, primarily in music and sports.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the accuracy of teachers' assessment of students' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - more rigorously checking each other's work and comparing it with that of teachers in other schools
 - insisting that teachers' marking, in all subjects, regularly provides specific, written feedback.
- Sharpen all leaders' checks on the quality of teaching by:
 - comparing carefully current monitoring arrangements with those in schools judged to be outstanding
 - sharing more widely the effective practice that exists already in the academy
 - challenging quickly and robustly any practice which falls short of the school's expectation.
- Increase significantly the proportion of lower attaining students who make expected progress in English by:
 - extending across the school the innovative work undertaken in Year 7 with those needing to catch up in reading
 - providing access to appropriate English GCSE qualifications, including for lower attaining students
 - increasing the support available to teachers to help lower attaining students prepare for English literature examinations.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher leads the school effectively. She is well supported by a newly appointed head of school and an effective senior team. The recent appointment of the head of school was the result of a thorough internal review. The review was undertaken as a response to the GCSE results in 2014. Leaders recognised the executive headteacher's need to keep tight oversight of the academy's outreach work with other schools.
- Senior leaders are committed to ensuring that every student, including those who attend alternative placements, make good progress. Leaders are aware that there are some aspects of the academy's work which need to improve further. For example, they know that standards in mathematics are not good enough for many students.
- Leaders have, over time, however, built a harmonious and caring community. Students and staff get on well and even the most vulnerable students thrive. Many of the values of Earl Mountbatten permeate the school so that students develop a strong sense of what it means to be British in the 21st century.
- The academy houses a community learning centre which enables adults locally to benefit from a range of educational programmes.
- Leaders at all levels check teachers' work regularly. They use detailed systems for tracking teachers' performance. Most are able to judge accurately the quality of teaching. However, they are overgenerous in their assessment of the quantity of teaching, which they believe to be outstanding. There is not enough teaching which is inspiring and develops in students a genuine interest or passion for learning. Leaders have not looked widely enough externally to find good examples of truly effective practice.
- The recent appointment of directors of learning has added strength to the leadership of teaching. Consequently, many teachers are improving their practice quickly.
- The academy's contribution to students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Students are able to explore their creativity through an exemplary programme of curricular and extra-curricular music. There are many impressive ensembles, such as the senior girls' choir. The big band has been asked to appear at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Students also explore their creativity through art, drama and dance. In religious studies, students are provided with many opportunities to explore the diversity of religious experience in the United Kingdom. Students cooperate well with each other socially and many take on leadership roles. This helps them appreciate democracy and participation. Issues of right and wrong are examined fully in, for example, form time, history and many English lessons.
- The academy has a broad and varied curriculum. Some of it is innovative, such as the inclusion of a single period of choral singing in Year 7 and a useful carousel of mini-options in Year 9. Students make good choices at GCSE level as a result.
- Middle leaders are an increasing strength of the academy. They provide good quality training to teachers so that teachers' skills are developing. The pastoral team is highly effective and is responsible for improving attendance, reducing exclusions and securing the well-being of the community's most vulnerable members.
- The pupil premium (additional government funding for those who are eligible) is put to good use and managed efficiently. Its impact is seen in the improved progress of those struggling with reading. It is also used to enable disadvantaged students to join in with learning activities away from the academy. This increases the depth of their learning in subjects like science, as they visit Marwell Zoo for example.
- Parents, staff and students were fully in agreement that the academy cares equally for all members of the community. Leaders are committed to equal opportunities and tackle racism on the rare occasions when it occurs.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure meets statutory requirements and is a good feature of its overall effectiveness.
- The academy receives a small amount of purchased advice from consultants locally. It draws on two groups of schools in the region for additional professional support. It is a strategic partner in a teaching school alliance and, as such, receives advice and guidance from peer colleagues.
- The information, advice and guidance students receive help them make good GCSE choices. They also help the students decide on a suitable placement for their post-16 studies. Students are provided with a full range of career choices.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully supportive of both the academy and its charged for outreach work with other schools. They are organised into a series of committees which allow them to focus sharply on the academy's work. They provide excellent support for management of the academy's finances. For

example, they monitor carefully the academy's use of the pupil premium to ensure it is used effectively. They have helped secure additional funding and managed well a number of building projects. Their knowledge of the quality of teaching and the school's academic performance is dependent on reports they receive from the executive headteacher. Governors were as surprised by the GCSE results as senior leaders in 2014.

- Governors support senior leaders' management of staff. They only reward good performance and have been helpful in challenging underperformance with considerable expertise in personnel matters. They judge the academy to be making progress, but acknowledge that there are some areas that need further improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their conduct around the academy and in the vast majority of lessons is good. A large majority take pride in their work, keeping it neatly in books or folders.
- Students are polite, courteous and friendly to each other and their teachers. Teachers treat each student with respect, so that healthy learning relationships are common. Inspectors saw almost no low level disruption. A few students became distracted in the minority of lessons where teaching failed to keep their interest.
- Attendance has improved recently and is above the national average. The number of disadvantaged, disabled or students with special educational needs who are frequently absent has reduced recently.
- No students have been permanently excluded since the academy was formed. The number of students receiving fixed term exclusions is below the national average.
- The behaviour and attendance of students attending alternative placements is closely monitored and is good. The academy's leaders check this by regular contact with their partners.
- Students and parents report rare instances of bullying. All report that the academy deals with bullying effectively when it occurs. They also note that help is provided for the student responsible as well as their victim. This is fully in keeping with the strong pastoral care of the academy.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good, including for those who are attending alternative placements.
- The site is secure, well maintained and free from litter. Students were successfully involved in the design of some aspects of its layout and a few help with gardening as part of their programme of enrichment.
- The academy's safeguarding arrangements are robust and well managed. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. Governors also receive effective annual updates on safeguarding matters. They have a policy of ensuring that every recruitment panel includes a properly trained member.
- The academy works effectively with a range of other agencies to ensure that vulnerable young people are as safe as possible.
- Students receive frequent reminders about staying safe through assemblies and form time. They understand the risks associated with social media and know how to keep themselves safe online. Teaching in religious studies addresses, sensitively, issues related to forced marriage. This is an example of the academy's intention to provide safe spaces for students to discuss matters that may affect themselves or their friends.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mainly good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate it well. Many manage their classrooms extremely well and support their teaching with effective resources. For the most part, teachers have extremely good relationships with students. Lessons flow easily, with good cooperation.
- Teachers use a variety of helpful techniques to plan their lessons. This varies from subject to subject and sometimes within subjects. Teachers also use a range of methods for recording students' achievement. Many use this information skilfully to plan their lessons.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to students' progress in many lessons. They are exceptionally effective with the STAR group. This programme provides a nurturing environment for those requiring additional support for learning in mainstream classrooms.
- Teaching provides good support for the most able students by challenging them to explore ideas more

deeply. The most effective teachers question skilfully these able students to probe their knowledge. They encourage them to extend more widely the range of words they use to describe what they are reading about or seeing.

- In partnership with the school librarian, teaching assistants' work has significant impact on those students who fell behind in reading in primary school. The teaching of reading is impressive. It enables those who did not benefit fully from learning phonics (the sounds letters make) earlier in their school career to acquire skills they missed. These initiatives are supported purposefully by the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- The academy's work to develop students' literacy is effective. A full range of strategies is used, including key words and model sentences. Students are encouraged to speak in full sentences and paragraphs so that they rehearse what they want to say before writing.
- The vast majority of teachers engage in meaningful dialogue about their work with students. Some provide good quality written comments on students' work. Others provide feedback in a range of interesting ways, such as sticky notes on design and technology folders. Overall, not enough teachers provide regular written feedback to students about how to improve their work, including the quality of presentation. This means that the presentation of some work is weak. This is especially true of some boys, many of whom are very able.
- In English, for example, much work is carried out on wash-wipe boards or large sheets of paper during whole or group activities. Some students, therefore, leave their lessons without a permanent record of what they were learning. This limits their capacity to revise for examinations.
- The relative underperformance of middle and lower attaining students in mathematics in Year 11 in 2014 was a shock to the academy. Leaders have acted swiftly to address this by providing additional training to teachers. As a result, achievement is rising and the pace of improvement is accelerating.
- Not all teachers compare their work regularly enough with each other. They do not check the standards in their subjects rigorously against those in other schools locally or nationally. As a result, they have an overgenerous view of how well students are doing. This led to an over estimate of likely performance in Year 11 in 2014 and, consequently, to disappointing results.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over time, students develop into mature young adults well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are also well prepared for the next stage of their lives. At the end of each Year 11, there are hardly any students who are not in education, employment or training.
- In 2014, the majority of students in Year 11 achieved five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. A substantial minority, however, did not enter an examination in English literature, so that the academy's results were just below the national average. These were mainly lower attaining pupils. The large majority of students who did enter an English literature examination passed at grade C or above.
- In many other subjects, students attained extremely good results. For example, the small group studying both Latin and classics all achieved A* to C grades. Results were similarly strong in music, religious studies, art and design, hospitality, statistics, textiles and dance. Results in all GCSE science subjects were good, with a large group achieving well in separate physics, chemistry and biology.
- Disadvantaged students in Year 11 in 2014 on average achieved a whole grade less per qualification than other students nationally. They achieved just less than a whole grade lower than their classmates. On average, they achieved one less qualification than their classmates. The gap between them and other students nationally was smaller than in 2013. However, now that leaders have recognised the gap, recent, appropriate and helpful interventions have been put in place. This is having a good impact on disadvantaged students' progress, which is good in the current academic year.
- The small proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs in Year 11 in 2014, on average, achieved a whole grade less than their classmates.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in English is below the national average. The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics is also below the national average. The proportions of students exceeding expected progress in English are below average, whilst the proportion making more than expected progress in mathematics is above average. This is masked by the high prior attainment of all students so that, despite only adequate progress, they achieve broadly average results.
- The academy estimates that the current Year 11 students are on track to achieve dramatically better results in July 2015. Leaders base their judgements on more rigorous assessments, additional lessons, tighter revision programmes, support from advisers and a change of examination specification in English. This will make the test papers more accessible to the lower attaining students. Inspectors saw robust

evidence of all these measures.

- Leaders also provided evidence that controlled assessments in science and English are indicating far greater levels of achievement already with the current group of Year 11 students.
- The current Year 11 and Year 10 arrived at the academy with attainment well above average. The cohort that sat examinations in 2014 had less high attainment on entry. However, their achievement remains disappointing when compared overall to students' attainment nationally. Leaders acknowledge this.
- The academy's work to develop students' reading is impressive. For those struggling to read, progress is measured in improvements to their reading ages. Progress is also supported through an effective reading scheme which students like, and which gives them access to books appropriate to their age. Students of all abilities use the library well and display excellent vocabulary in discussions with their teachers.
- Those more able disadvantaged students made better progress than other students nationally.
- The achievement of students attending alternative placements is good. They make good progress towards appropriate vocational qualifications.
- Progress in lessons, and viewed in students' books, is good. This has improved recently as a result of high quality training from newly appointed directors of learning.
- Current validated information about attainment and progress suggests that the four-year downward trend in results will be halted this year.
- The academy does not enter students early for examinations.
- The success of students in a large majority of subjects, especially those most able, and the most able disadvantaged students, indicates rapidly improving achievement overall. This stems from the academy's commitment to equal opportunities and its concern that all students achieve well.

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	136640
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	449684
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jill Hall
Headteacher	Mrs Heather McIlroy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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