

The Forest High School

Causeway Road, Cinderford, GL14 2AZ

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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.

- Attainment is low in many subjects, and students' progress is too slow. Their achievement is inadequate.
- In 2014, the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students in the academy and other students nationally widened.
- The achievement of boys is not improving fast enough and the most-able students do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. Very little use is made of assessment information to plan lessons that make sure all students progress as well as they should.
- Teachers' use of questioning is too variable in quality and does not challenge the thinking of many students.
- The accuracy of teachers' assessment is poor. As a result not all students receive the help they need and so underachieve.
- In some subjects, teachers' marking does not help students to improve their work.
- Literacy and numeracy are not taught consistently well enough across subjects.
- When teaching fails to engage students, some lose concentration and there is low-level disruption to learning. Teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- Subject leaders do not play a full role in improving teaching and raising students' achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Funding to support disadvantaged students is not used effectively to raise their achievement.
- The curriculum does not meet the abilities or interests of all students and does not promote good achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Leaders and governors have not addressed weaknesses in teaching and poor student progress.
- Since the previous inspection, and until withdrawing from sponsoring the academy in February 2015, the E-ACT Academy Trust failed to support governors and leaders in tackling the weaknesses in teaching and poor achievement identified at the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Since it took over the sponsorship six weeks ago, the South Gloucestershire and Stroud Academy Trust has lost no time in assessing the needs of the academy. The Trust is putting in place systems to redress the decline in standards of teaching and achievement.
- Governors are better informed. They are starting to offer greater challenge to the academy's leaders.
- The newly appointed headteacher, in the two weeks she has been in post, has made an accurate assessment of what needs to be done to improve teaching and raise standards. She is already gaining the trust and confidence of staff and students.
- Procedures for safeguarding students are effective. Students say they feel safe and well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 22 lessons to observe the progress and engagement of students. Seven of these were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors reviewed the quality of the work in students' books to judge the effectiveness of marking, the progress of students over time, and the accuracy of the academy's assessment information.
- Other aspects of the academy day were observed, including morning registration and afternoon tutor time; students' behaviour in breakfast club, at break, lunchtime and between lessons; and students' arrival and departure from the academy.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff and subject leaders. A discussion took place with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. In addition, the lead inspector met with a representative from the sponsoring academy trust and the headteacher of a high performing school that is providing external support for the academy.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of students formally in meetings and with a number of students informally in lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 11 parents and carers who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire, a phone call from a parent, and 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including the academy's information on students' progress, self-evaluation and improvement plans, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, checks on the quality of teaching, attendance records and behaviour log, minutes of governing body meetings, documents relating to students' safety, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Greenway

Additional Inspector

Raymond Friel

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

- The academy is a much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds, with a very small minority from different ethnic groups. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- A very small number of students are educated off-site for one day per week at Gloucestershire College.
- 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.
- Until February 2015, the academy's sponsor was E-ACT Multi-Academy Trust.
- In March 2015, South Gloucestershire and Stroud Academy Trust (SGS) became the academy's sponsor.
- Since March 2015, the academy has received support from Pate's Grammar School, Elizabeth Way, Cheltenham.
- A new headteacher took up post on 1 May 2015.
- There is a high level of staff turnover and absence.
- Current Year 11 students were entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics and science. The majority of Year 10 students are entered early for English literature.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that students' achievement accelerates across all subjects, by making sure that:
 - all inadequate teaching is eliminated
 - teachers use information about what students can do to plan work that is at the right level of challenge for different abilities
 - teachers' assessment of students' work is accurate so that underachievement can be identified and tackled
 - teachers' questioning is used to assess students' learning and progress, to challenge and develop students' thinking and to deepen their understanding
 - teachers' marking gives students a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, and that teachers check that students have improved their work as a result of the advice they have given
 - students practise their writing skills in different subjects
 - pupils use their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems across different subjects
 - students' behaviour is managed consistently well, so that poor behaviour is not tolerated and all teachers take swift action to prevent learning being disrupted.
- Raise achievement in all subjects by making sure that:
 - all students, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make the progress they should
 - the achievement of disadvantaged students in the academy improves so that the gap between their achievement and the achievement of other students nationally is closed
 - boys' achievement improves so that the gap in achievement between boys and girls is closed
 - the most-able students make at least good progress and achieve well.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - assessment data are accurate across all subjects

- leaders make more effective use of additional government funding to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and others in the academy and nationally
- leaders set out clear guidelines on the teaching of literacy and numeracy across subjects
- subject leaders are held to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement in their areas of responsibility
- the curriculum more effectively reflects the different abilities of students and that it better supports students' achievement in English, mathematics and science
- leaders at all levels insist on staff applying academy policies consistently, particularly for marking and behaviour.

An external review of the academy's use of 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 have not improved the academy quickly enough since its previous inspection. GCSE results in 2013 and 2014 were well below national averages. Leaders have not tackled many issues identified at the last inspection.
- Leaders have not monitored, identified or acted upon students' underachievement, teachers' underperformance, and weak subject leadership with sufficient rigour or urgency. As a result, too much teaching is inadequate or requires improvement. Too many students have made inadequate progress, and too many subjects are poorly led.
- When E-ACT Academy Trust sponsored the academy, it did not prevent the decline in education offered by the academy. During this time governors were given inaccurate information about the quality of teaching, the attainment and progress of students, and the overall performance of staff. They were not effective in holding senior leaders to account.
- The management of teachers' performance has been poor. Systems to tackle underperformance have not been rigorous enough to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching or in raising students' achievement.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching is inadequate. Students' achievement across the academy is inadequate because of poor teaching over time. Academy leaders do not have a reliable system for checking students' progress because information is based on inaccurate teacher assessments. Leaders' procedures for checking the quality of teaching are also ineffective.
- Subject leaders do not thoroughly check the quality of teaching in their areas or look closely at the progress of different groups of students. They do not hold staff to account or challenge underperformance rigorously enough.
- The curriculum is ineffective in raising the performance of the students. The range of subjects and the time allocations for English, mathematics and science do not match the abilities, needs or interests of all students, and this is hindering their progress. The newly appointed headteacher is revising the curriculum for 2015/16. However, current provision is inadequate.
- The promotion of literacy and numeracy across subjects is inadequate. There are no systems or policies to ensure that students practise their skills, or any guidelines to ensure teachers do this consistently well.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged students is not used effectively to improve the achievement of these students. The gap between their attainment and other students in the academy and students nationally has widened since the previous inspection.
- Careers guidance is built into the academy's personal and social development days and starts in Year 7. In addition, Years 10 and 11 have access to good quality internal and external careers advice so that almost all students are successful in moving to education or training at the end of Year 11. However, as students do not achieve well in the academy they are not fully prepared for their next stage of education or training.
- The academy does not promote equality of opportunity well. Only a small minority of students make the progress they should and there are wide gaps in the achievement of different groups, including disadvantaged students and those who are disabled and have special educational needs.
- The quality of education provided by the academy has been seriously impaired by a high level of turnover of staff and a large number of staff absences.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective through lessons and special days dedicated to personal and social development. The academy celebrates different cultures and religions and promotes the British values of tolerance and respect. In addition, students benefit from a wide range of after-school activities, sporting events and educational trips. Students contribute to the running of the school through the school council.
- The South Gloucestershire and Stroud Academy Trust has given good support since it became the academy's sponsor six weeks ago. It has helped to appoint a new headteacher, provided training for governors and support in revising systems for managing the safeguarding of students. In addition, the Trust has brokered support for the academy from a high performing grammar school in the local area. It shows a strong commitment to provide the support needed to ensure that improvements take place at a fast pace. However, this support has just begun and it is too early to measure its impact.
- The new headteacher, in the short time in post, has gained a good understanding of the weaknesses and inadequacies in the academy. She has brought a sense of vision and purpose that is welcomed by many staff. Responses to the questionnaire, and discussions with staff during inspection, show that they are confident that she will bring about much needed change. She has already revised safeguarding procedures

and is working closely with the sponsors, a headteacher from a local grammar school and the assistant headteacher responsible for teaching in the academy. Their priority is to revise the monitoring of teaching and to provide staff with training and support to improve teaching skills. However, she has had insufficient time to put changes into place and the quality of teaching and students' progress remain inadequate.

- All statutory child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- The academy works closely with providers of off-site courses to check the progress of the students.
- Most of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire are pleased with the education the academy provides for students.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

The governance of the school:

- Until December 2014, governors received inaccurate information about the quality of teaching and students' progress, and they were not encouraged to take an active role in the work of the academy. They were ineffective in challenging leaders to improve standards.
- When the sponsorship of the E-ACT Academy Trust was withdrawn, governors became more involved, found new sponsorship and, with the new sponsor's help, appointed a new headteacher. Currently, governors are working closely with the new sponsors to revise and restructure the governing body. They are receiving good support and training from sponsors, and are becoming more effective in their role of support and challenge.
- Governors have a clearer understanding of how the academy compares with other schools nationally through better scrutiny of published national data, and by making regular visits to the academy to look at teaching, students' work and to talk to staff and students to gain their views.
- Governors are now more rigorous in overseeing the performance management of staff and are clear about the link between pay progression and students' progress.
- Governors check the academy's spending closely and have long-term financial plans that take account of changing student numbers. However, while they have monitored spending of government funding for disadvantaged students, they have not evaluated the effectiveness of its use.
- Governors oversee all statutory child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures. They make sure that the academy effectively promotes British values and that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- When teaching does not fully engage and challenge students, there is too much low-level disruption in lessons. Students lack concentration and their progress is slow. Students told inspectors that teachers do not consistently apply the policy for managing behaviour. They said that sometimes teachers are too severe and, at other times, poor behaviour goes unchecked by staff.
- In 2013 and 2014, the proportions of students excluded, either for fixed periods or permanently were high. These exclusions included a high proportion of disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs. However, this year these numbers have reduced greatly because of the much improved support given to vulnerable students in danger of permanent exclusion or those students who are repeat offenders.
- Behaviour around the school is good. There is a calm and respectful atmosphere. Students say they get on well with one another and with staff. Students take care of their environment and there is no evidence of graffiti or litter around the academy.
- Staff closely check the behaviour and attendance of the very small number of students following part-time courses at the Gloucestershire College. Their behaviour and attendance on these courses are good.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students told inspectors that they feel safe, that bullying is rare and incidents of racist and homophobic behaviour are uncommon. They say that on the few occasions that bullying happens, staff deal with them promptly and effectively. They are very positive that adults in the academy are approachable and that if they need any kind of help it will be provided.
- Students value the information about safety that they receive in lessons and on special days devoted to personal and social development. They enjoy the opportunities to listen to guest speakers and take part in activities that raise their awareness of staying healthy. They are clear about how to stay safe on the

internet and when using social media. They talked sensibly to inspectors about the dangers of smoking, alcohol and substance abuse.

- The academy is working hard to raise parents' and students' awareness of the importance of good attendance. Since the previous inspection, it appointed a member of staff to work with the families of students who are regularly absent. As a result, attendance is improving and current information shows that it is now in line with the national average. The proportions of students from different groups with recurring absences, apart from girls, are reducing.
- The newly appointed headteacher, supported by the new academy sponsors, has revised the systems for safeguarding students and they now meet statutory requirements.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching over time is inadequate and, as a result, most students fail to make the progress they should. Teaching is weak across most subjects, but particularly in mathematics, science and technology. The teaching of literacy and numeracy across subjects is poor.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low. In many lessons, teachers do not plan and set work to stretch and challenge different abilities of students. This results in many students making inadequate progress.
- Teachers' assessment of students' work and their predictions about what students are likely to achieve are inaccurate. This means that those students who need additional help are not identified quickly enough, do not get the support they need and do not make the progress they should.
- Students' enthusiasm and interest in learning vary depending on the subject and the teacher. Students are keen to learn in lessons that are well planned and engage and challenge them. However, where teaching is weak, students find it hard to stay focused on their work and disrupt the learning of others.
- The impact of teaching assistants depends on the quality of planning of the teacher. When teachers do not plan the work of teaching assistants well enough their skills are not used to best advantage. However, when teaching assistants have clear guidelines, they provide valuable support for disabled students and those with special education needs.
- Teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most-able students. As a result, students often complete work that does not stretch their learning. This means that these students do not make rapid progress and not enough are achieving higher levels in national tests.
- Marking of students' work varies across different subjects because teachers are not using the academy's marking policy consistently. Some students' books have very few teacher comments to help students improve their work. This is particularly true in mathematics and technology. Marking of spelling, grammar and punctuation across subjects is limited.
- The academy does not have policies to make sure that literacy and numeracy are taught consistently well across subjects. Students have too few opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English, and there is limited scope for students to apply their problem-solving skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- There are pockets of good practice where teachers provide demanding and interesting work which builds on students' previous learning and fully engages their interest. In a Year 7 music lesson, for example, the teacher set high expectations and used excellent subject knowledge to plan activities that built on prior learning. All were engaged and enjoying their learning. There was a climate of trust and respect leading to good progress in developing good singing skills.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate as the result of weak teaching and poor leadership. For the last two years, the academy has not met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' achievement. The proportions of student gaining five GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, in 2013 and 2014 were much lower than the national figures. Results for both years were much worse than the academy's predictions.
- In 2014, in English GCSE examinations, the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C was well below the national average. The proportion of students who made expected gains in English improved compared to the 2013 results, but were still below the figures nationally. Assessment information indicates that there will be little improvement for the current Years 10 and 11. Students in Key Stage 3 English are well behind where they should be.

- In mathematics, the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C in 2014 was well below the national average. The proportion of students who made and exceeded the progress expected nationally was well below the national average and showed little change over two years. The academy's current assessment information shows an improvement in Years 10 and 11, but this is not reliable. Work seen in books and in lessons by inspectors shows students are making inadequate progress in mathematics at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students attained less well than others in the academy and nationally. In English, students were around two thirds of a GCSE grade behind others in the academy, and one and a third grades behind students nationally. In mathematics, they were three quarters of a grade behind other students in the academy and a grade and three quarters behind students nationally. Gaps have widened since the previous inspection.
- The most-able students do not reach the standards they should. Expectations for these students remain too low. They did not do well at GCSE in 2013 or 2014 and current assessments show there is little improvement in their progress. Their results in English GCSE in 2014 were better than other subjects, and their progress in this subject continues to improve.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not achieve the standards they should.
- The progress of boys was an issue at the previous inspection, and the gap between boys' and girls' achievement remains. In the 2014 GCSE examinations, boys attained well below girls in English, mathematics and science. In addition, their attainment and achievement were well below boys nationally.
- Students supported by the Year 7 catch-up funding in 2013/14 made better progress than their classmates in improving their reading ages, and in narrowing the gap in numeracy. Targeted one-to-one teaching and additional literacy and numeracy lessons improved provision and students' progress.
- The very small number of students who receive part of their education elsewhere make similar progress to others in the academy.
- The academy's policy for entering students early for GCSE examinations is ad hoc, and is detrimental to the attainment of students. Some current Year 11 students were entered early for part of their GCSE biology examination at the end of Year 9, and some were entered for GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 8. In contrast, those who are following the additional science GCSE examination were not entered for core science last year, which means they will take core and additional science examinations together. At present, most Year 10 students are set to take their GCSE in English literature in July 2015 so that they can concentrate on English language next year. The new headteacher intends to revise the academy's early entry policy.

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	138496
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	462478

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neill Ricketts
Headteacher	Yvonne Jones
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2013
Telephone number	01594822257
Email address	info@foresthigh.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

