

Bishop of Rochester Academy

Magpie Hall Road, Chatham, ME4 5JB

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Students' achievement requires improvement because, in 2014, GCSE results were well below the national average. Students' progress was too slow in English, science, languages and humanities.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure students make sufficient progress, particularly in English, science, languages and humanities.
- As a result of weaker teaching, students' progress in English is not improving as rapidly as it is in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make sufficient use of information about students' levels to plan work that fully challenges all groups of students, especially the most-able and disadvantaged pupils.
- The rate of progress of disadvantaged students is below that of other students in the academy and nationally.
- Where there is weaker teaching, which lacks challenge and pace, some students lose focus on their learning and their behaviour deteriorates. The resultant low level disruption is not dealt with consistently well by all staff.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Too few students make good progress in their academic and work-related courses.
- Students' attendance and punctuality, including within the sixth form are below the national average.
- The quality of middle leadership is variable. In some subjects, leaders have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive principal, the acting principal and senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They are building on the effective action to improve teaching and students' achievement started by the previous senior leadership team.
- The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is providing effective support to the academy's leadership to support the improvements in the quality of teaching and student progress.
- The arrangements to keep students safe and secure are good. As a result, students feel confident in the adults around them.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is catered for well through a variety of activities across the academy.
- Significant strength is emerging in middle leadership, particularly in mathematics, design and technology and the arts, where achievement is now good.
- The support from senior leadership for English is already beginning to impact on improved students' attainment, especially that of weaker readers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects. Several lessons were observed with members of the senior leadership team.
- No Year 11 and Year 13 lessons were observed as these groups had completed their examinations and were no longer in school.
- The inspectors talked with students while they were working, and at break and lunchtimes. They met formally with groups of students from each of the key stages to find out their views and experiences of the academy.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior staff, subject leaders and members of the governing body. The inspection team also looked at the academy’s evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including records of students’ attendance and behaviour. They examined the academy’s own information on students’ recent and current progress. In addition, the inspection team looked at students’ work in their books and folders in lessons and a sample of work from students who had recently left.
- There were only five responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, but inspectors took account of the parent questionnaire that the academy had recently conducted.

Inspection team

Moazam Parvez, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Edgar	Additional Inspector
Keith Williams	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Wood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishop of Rochester Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The academy is located in an area where there are a number of grammar schools who recruit more-able students. Consequently, the ability profile of the school is skewed towards the lower ability bands.
- The academy first opened in 2010 and in 2015 it changed sponsors, and is now sponsored by The Thinking Schools Academy Trust.
- The academy is able to access support, expertise and training from the partner schools within the trust to help improve student progress and staff expertise.
- The very large majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- A very small number of students attend the Love to Learn alternative provision on a part-time or full-time basis.
- The executive principal and the acting principal have been in post since April 2015. The acting principal was formerly the deputy headteacher at the academy. The academy recently has had a high turnover of staff and many of the posts are filled by temporary teachers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all subject leaders take greater responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement in their areas, and check that all policies, including those for behaviour and assessment, are consistently applied
 - leaders focus on improving the behaviour for learning so that minor disruption is eliminated and students' progress improves more quickly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, so it is consistently good in order to quicken students' achievement, particularly in English, humanities, languages and science, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment data more effectively in order to plan work that is at the right level of difficulty to challenge all groups of students, particularly the most-able and disadvantaged students.
 - teachers apply the academy's marking policy consistently well so that students know how to make further progress.
- Improve attendance and punctuality, including in the sixth form.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leaders, governors and the academy trust have not yet done enough to ensure that teaching and the progress students make across all subjects and age groups are consistently good. Recent improvements, which include new staff appointments and the implementation of a range of new systems and procedures, are having a measurable impact on the overall quality of teaching and students' behaviour. However, it is too early for their impact to be demonstrated over time.
- The leadership of mathematics, design and technology and art is strong and is resulting in rapid improvement in students' engagement in lessons and their achievement.
- Not all subject leaders, however, have provided effective leadership, because they have not focused on improving the quality of teaching or raising students' achievement in their curriculum areas. This has led to weaker achievement of students, particularly in science, languages and humanities.
- The assistant vice-principal with responsibility for teaching and learning has a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses, and is taking action to improve teaching through a range of strategies, including coaching, mentoring and training.
- The academy is now using data effectively to identify where additional support and intervention are required to improve the quality of teaching and to raise teachers' and students' expectations of what can be achieved. The impact can be seen in the quality of planning and the improved progress of students. However, this is not yet fully embedded across the academy.
- The school cannot yet demonstrate that the pupil premium funding is being used effectively over time. Although the achievement of disadvantaged students has improved as a result of the strategies put in place, significant gaps remain. Moreover, leaders are not clear about which of the strategies are the most successful, because they are not checking the impact well enough.
- There are now more rigorous procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching through no-notice lesson observations and monitoring of the standard of work in students' books. This is supported by colleagues from the partnership schools. However, these systems have only recently been introduced and so it is too early to be confident of their long term impact.
- Leaders have ensured that the academy's curriculum is broad and balanced. The senior leadership have established a new curriculum model that better meets the needs of the students.
- The academy's work to promote all aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Activities include events such as 'show racism the red card' and 'our academy remembers' on Armistice Day. This enables students to understand the relevance of these activities to life in modern Britain.
- The academy promotes awareness of equal opportunities in a variety of ways, for example, the celebration of cultural differences through a whole day celebration of Saint Nicholas led by the Czech and Roma students. International Women's Day provided opportunities for girls to meet successful women role models. It also helped boys to understand the importance of gender equality. Nevertheless, the promotion of equal opportunities is not yet successful because not all groups of students are achieving equally well.
- Leaders check the progress, attendance and behaviour of students who attend the Love to Learn alternative provision. These students are making progress which is in line with their peers in the academy.
- The academy's leaders ensure that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain through promotion of British values such as democracy. During the recent general election, for example, students were encouraged to set up political parties and campaign in order to gain a better understanding of the democratic process operating in Britain today.
- Safeguarding arrangements are strong and fully meet statutory requirements. All policies, including behaviour and anti-bullying, are in place and are checked by the senior leaders and governors. Initiatives, such as 'Is it worth it?', highlight the dangers that the internet can present to students.
- The Thinking Schools Academies Trust has provided good support to bring about improvements at the academy. The support provided by the partner schools in the trust is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and student progress.
- Leaders have made sure that students get helpful guidance about careers and course choices when they need it in all years, including the sixth form.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the academy is much improved. The Chair of the Governing Body was asked to lead the governing body by the regional schools commissioner in order to improve governance of the academy. This has resulted in the replacement of all governors and the establishment of a new

- governing body in April 2015, with a range of skills, including finance, education and commerce.
- The new governing body has already had a significant impact on the management of the academy. Governors, with the financial expertise present on the governing body, have supported the academy in managing the financial deficit and setting a budget that will eradicate this deficit.
 - Governors have worked with senior leaders to improve the systems for managing the performance of staff. The Chair of the Governing Body, who is a headteacher of a high performing local school, has a very good knowledge of the quality of teaching and the information about the school's performance. There is now a close link between the quality of teaching, students' achievement and salary progression. This has enabled the academy to deal with underperformance quickly and effectively.
 - Governors have an understanding of how additional funding for disadvantaged students and Year 7 catch-up received by the academy is used. However, they are not clear on which strategies have brought about the improvements for disadvantaged students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because students' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive in all subjects and with all staff. In lessons which lack challenge and pace, some students become bored and this leads to minor disruption of learning. This has led to some students making slow progress in their learning.
- Around the academy, most students are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Most apply themselves well to their learning, especially in the subjects they enjoy most.
- The systems in place for managing students' behaviour are not applied consistently by all teachers. Some students told inspectors that not all teachers follow the academy's procedures for dealing with disruptive behaviour in a consistent way.
- The level of fixed-term and permanent exclusions is higher than the national average and this reflects the poor behaviour of a small group of students. Academy records show that incidences of exclusion are now reducing.
- Students' attendance, which is below the national average, is improving, but not quickly enough.
- Records kept by the academy show that students on alternative placements are monitored during their time away from the academy. They attend regularly and reports from the alternative provider, Love to Learn, show that these students' behaviour is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe; this includes when they are online.
- Whilst students say that there is some bullying, they say that when reported it is dealt with quickly by the staff of the academy. The majority of students display good tolerance of others' sexuality, background and religious beliefs.
- All staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding matters and understand the procedures that need to be followed if necessary.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students, including checks on the recruitment of staff, are rigorous and monitored regularly.
- Students say that they are well looked after and feel safe at the academy. They say they know who to go to if they have a problem.
- The academy ensures that students attending the Love to Learn alternative provision are safe and secure.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been sufficiently consistent in a number of subjects. This has resulted in too few students making good progress from their starting points, including in key subjects such as English, science, languages and humanities.
- The quality of teaching varies across subjects. There are too many lessons where teachers do not use assessment information well enough to make sure that activities are set at the right level to challenge and engage students of all abilities, especially the most able.
- Teaching is particularly effective in mathematics. This has secured more rapid progress for the majority of students.

- The quality of marking across the academy is inconsistent. Where marking and feedback are strongest, as in mathematics, there is a positive impact on achievement. However, in a large number of classes, marking and feedback do not provide enough guidance to students on how to improve their work.
- Students' behaviour and engagement in learning depend on the quality of teaching; students are more engaged and make better progress when lessons are challenging and the work is set at the right level for all. In one music lesson, for example, students working on African music were given the opportunity to further develop their understanding by experimenting and adding to the music they were playing. As a result, all students were fully engaged in the lesson and made excellent progress.
- Policies to promote literacy are in place, but are at an early stage in their implementation. The use of key words enables students to focus on the importance of subject specific language in responding to teachers' questioning and the activities in lessons.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because the progress that they make over time and across all subjects is not yet consistently good. Progress in mathematics is strong, but in English achievement is improving at a slower rate.
- In 2014, too many students did not make the progress that they should in science. There was also underperformance in a number of other subjects across the curriculum, including languages and humanities.
- In 2014, the proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was significantly below the national average. The academy's current forecast for 2015, which is based on carefully monitored ongoing assessments as well as work that has been moderated by the examination boards, indicates that this proportion is set to rise significantly.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students is below that of others in the academy and nationally. In 2014, in English they were two thirds of a GCSE grade behind their peers at the academy and almost a full grade behind other students nationally. In mathematics, disadvantaged students were over a full grade behind others at the academy and other students nationally. They did not make as much progress as other students nationally. The progress of disadvantaged students is improving and gaps in progress are narrowing across all year groups at the academy and with other students nationally.
- The most-able students do not achieve their full potential because they are not always given sufficiently challenging work. Not enough of these students reach the higher grades in GCSE examinations.
- The proportion of students who made expected, or more than expected, progress in 2014 was above the national average in mathematics, but below in English. However, progress is improving and the specific programmes to support weaker readers have been particularly successful.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive teaching and support that meet their needs and so they make progress that is similar to the other students at the academy, and improving.
- The academy entered a small number of students early for GCSE mathematics in 2014. This did not limit the most-able students' opportunity to do well. Students who did not reach their target grade retook the examinations in the summer and so had the opportunity to improve on their first grade.
- Students who study work-related courses off-site at Love to Learn alternative provision make similar progress to other students in the academy.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Sixth form provision requires improvement. The proportions of students making expected progress have improved over time, but progress still remains variable in both academic and work-related courses.
- The monitoring of students' work is inconsistent; the quality of assessment and marking does not enable students to gain a good understanding of how to improve their work in order to make better progress.
- The re-sit courses for English and mathematics in the sixth form are successful. More than half of the students re-sitting GCSE examinations in English and mathematics were successful in achieving a pass grade.
- Leaders check learners' progress in each subject regularly. Tutors meet with students individually to discuss what is going well and what needs improving. Students receive suitable support when they need it.
- The low numbers in the sixth form has had an impact on the curriculum on offer. The choice of subjects offered is consequently limited. However this is being addressed through the broadening of the curriculum

on offer through the partnership with Chatham Grammar School for Boys. This has enabled sixth form students from the academy to attend courses offered at the partnership school.

- The retention rate for girls staying on from Year 12 into Year 13 is too low. In Year 12, the number of boys and girls is similar; however, in Year 13, there are only half as many girls as boys.
- Students' attendance requires improvement in the sixth form. Behaviour in the sixth form is good, the relationships between students and their teachers are good.
- Teaching in the sixth form is typically good. Teachers' regular assessments of students' understanding ensure teachers set suitably challenging work. As a result, attainment has improved in a number of subjects, including economics, psychology and product design, at A and AS level and extended project diploma, as well as information technology in the vocational qualifications.
- Students receive helpful careers advice and guidance and they have clear, well thought out plans for their futures.
- The number of students attending the more prestigious universities is increasing as a result of good support for students in selecting and applying for higher education courses.
- Students told inspectors that they felt safe and well supported by the staff at the academy.

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	136108
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	462395

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	847
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Bauckham
Executive Principal	Stuart Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 June 2013
Telephone number	01634 303005
Email address	stuart.gardner@cgsb.co.uk

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