

Tiverton High School

Bolham Road, Tiverton, EX16 6SQ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership with a clear moral purpose to help every student to succeed. This has brought about significant improvement to the school's provision.
- There are high expectations of teachers and students. Leaders and teachers have developed their knowledge and improved the skills necessary to raise the quality of teaching which is now good.
- As a consequence of more effective teaching, the achievement of all groups of students has improved and is also now good.
- Overall, GCSE results in 2014 were around the national average. This reflects the good and sometimes outstanding progress made from often low starting points.
- Although GCSE results in English and mathematics were just below the national average, the typical attainment of current students in these subjects is good because of improved teaching.
- Teaching and learning in most other subjects are also good and improving in modern languages.
- Disadvantaged students as a group are now making more rapid gains in their learning because of the carefully planned support they receive.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well. The academic and personal support given to students attending the Communications and Interaction Resource Base (CAIRB) is particularly effective.
- Students in this large school conduct themselves sensibly and safely, with respect for others and their environment. Typically, they are friendly and considerate. There is very little bullying and students feel safe.
- Most students have developed positive attitudes to learning. They want to achieve and therefore they work hard. The drive to raise the aspirations of all students is now ensuring that more strive to achieve their best.
- Students are confident that extensive provision keeps them safe and secure.
- Leadership throughout the school is typically good with some examples of highly effective practice both within both the senior and middle leadership teams.
- Governance has improved. Governors have improved their skills in checking the work of the school and now hold leaders to account more rigorously. This has contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- GCSE results do not yet fully reflect the school's work to raise aspirations and improve learning. In recent years, some students, especially those who are disadvantaged, have not achieved as highly as they should have done.
- Subject leaders and teachers have not yet secured outstanding teaching and learning across all of the school. In particular, standards in design and technology are lower than in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Members of the inspection team observed parts of 40 lessons, some of which were observed with senior leaders. They also undertook short visits to a range of lessons to look at provision for students who have special educational needs. No Year 11 lessons were observed, as this year group was no longer in school following their GCSE examinations.
- Inspectors observed a Year 10 assembly and visited some tutor time sessions.
- The views of students were collected in three meetings with different groups from across the school. Inspectors also talked to students in lessons and during break times.
- Members of the team held meetings with senior leaders and other staff members to talk about their work and hear their views about the school. They also took into account the views of the 95 staff who completed staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents including the school's plans for improvement, progress and evaluation reports, records of achievement, attendance and behaviour and the school's safeguarding checks. They also scrutinised the minutes of governors' meetings.
- Meetings were held with four governors and the local authority school improvement advisor.
- An inspector with expertise in special educational needs looked at the effectiveness of the support provided by the CAIRB.
- The views of 155 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online survey, were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Paul Holroyd	Additional Inspector
Malcolm Willis	Additional Inspector
Tracy Harris	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tiverton High School is larger than the average-sized school. It provides education for local students between the ages of 11 and 16.
- The vast majority of students are of White British background and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is around double the national average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs in the form of a specialist communication and interaction resource base, known as the CAIRB. At the time of inspection, three of the eight available places were currently taken up.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for pupil premium funding is just below the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding provided to schools to support looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A greater proportion than average of Year 7 students are eligible for catch-up funding. This funding is to support students who did not achieve the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of primary school.
- A very small number of students follow work-related courses at Petroc which is a further education college situated adjacent to Tiverton High School.
- Occasionally, students at risk of permanent exclusion attend the Alternative Education Company which is a privately run organisation which provides work-related activities and behaviour support.
- The headteacher is the executive headteacher of Rackenford Primary School.
- The school is part of the Tiverton Co-operative Learning Partnership, founded on a cooperative trust, with Petroc, Tiverton Community Arts Theatre (TCAT), 11 primary schools, a textiles company and a local health and fitness initiative. It also works in partnership with other cooperative schools in the area.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching and learning across the school so that all students achieve as highly as possible; in particular:
 - strengthen the focus on raising aspirations so that all students are equally stretched and challenged to achieve in line with their potential
 - extend and adapt the most effective support and provision already in place for disadvantaged students to help all groups of learners achieve the best GCSE results possible
 - improve standards of teaching and learning in design and technology to match the best provision in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads this school with determination and has a rigorous approach to making improvements to teaching and learning. He has successfully introduced a school-wide focus on raising aspirations and ambition. This has resulted in improved teaching skills and higher levels of achievement for current students. Published GCSE results in 2014 do not reflect this improvement fully. The school is a well-ordered and welcoming community in which students behave well and thrive in their education.
- Strong leadership at senior level extends to many other team leaders. Leaders of learning and the head of aspirations, for example, are highly effective role models for other subject leaders. They help to extend good practice in teaching across the school. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because some subject leaders are relatively inexperienced in their roles. They are not yet fully proficient in checking the work of their teams and ensuring that all students make outstanding progress.
- The quality of training for teachers is high, providing a range of opportunities for individuals and teams to improve their work. All teachers have targets that relate to the main school aims. Their work is closely monitored throughout the year and pay awards are linked to successful performance. Weaker teaching is dealt with swiftly and effectively through targeted support plans.
- Standards of teaching and learning across most subjects, including in English and mathematics, have improved and are now good. Where standards have been too low, such as in modern languages, leaders have taken decisive action and achievement is improving. Teaching and learning in design and technology remain an area for improvement for the school.
- To improve the way students' progress is tracked, leaders have conducted an in-depth exploration of how students learn. The resulting system is making a significant contribution to students' achievement in Key Stage 3 because they can see clear pathways towards their learning goals.
- This school is highly inclusive and strives to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed. There is a shared moral purpose to prepare every student for life, overcoming barriers, disadvantage and discrimination when necessary. The appointment of a head of aspirations is having a highly positive impact on achievement, especially for disadvantaged students.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are taught and supported well so that they make good progress. This is because the two special educational needs coordinators are using their specialist qualifications well to oversee provision. In particular, they ensure that students in the CAIRB feel safe and secure and are equipped with appropriate learning skills.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others in the school and nationally have historically been too large. Leaders have put in place an extensive support programme and as a result, gaps are closing rapidly. Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to help students, particularly in English.
- In addition to key academic subjects such as English, mathematics and science, all students have opportunities to develop their interests. They are encouraged to take up a language as a GCSE subject but are not forced to do so, should they wish to follow a humanities or more creative pathway. Provision for drama, art, music and sport is exceptionally strong both within and outside of the school day.
- The very small numbers of students who attend courses at Petroc Further Education College normally make good progress. This is due to effective partnerships between staff in the school and those at the college.
- The focus on high aspirations extends to careers guidance. Independent careers guidance for all groups, including the most able and disadvantaged students, is of a high quality. This is supplemented well by a range of activities and opportunities to foster and support student ambition when making choices about their next steps in education or training.
- The students' development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. Students are helped to develop the skills they will need in employment and in society more generally. These include resilience, perseverance, leadership, optimism, a sense of justice and tolerance of the beliefs and opinions of others. Creativity is nurtured and the standard of performance, artwork and photography is particularly high. Art displays around the school are inspirational. Everyone joining the school makes a ceramic starling for the impressive murmurations around the site.
- All students follow religion and philosophy and general studies GCSE courses. These help them to consider social issues and what it means to be British and also prepare them for living in a multicultural society.
- The school places a high priority on keeping students safe and preparing them for their futures. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are comprehensive and effective. Students described how they are taught to manage risks to health, safety and well-being and could explain how to keep themselves safe when online, for example. The school invests heavily in the provision

of counsellors and other staff to provide highly effective support and guidance for students. Every tutor group has two tutors who provide support and academic guidance for individual students and monitor their personal development and safety.

- Most parents who responded to the online survey hold the school in high regard. The school's work in developing partnerships with families is helping to increase the life chances of students.
- The school is at the centre of its community through its ambitious work with collaborative partnerships. Major contributions to events such as the Lion King production, involving over 500 local primary school children, give students a wealth of opportunities to develop their potential.
- The school has valued the significant support of the local authority in helping it to improve teaching and learning. The school has also benefited from its partnership with other cooperative schools, including those in the Tiverton Cooperative Learning Partnership, to improve and validate its work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very effective in their role of checking the work of the school and holding senior leaders to account. They have undertaken training to improve their understanding of achievement information and how teaching relates to learning. Through regular reports from senior leaders and visits to the school, they now have a good knowledge of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. As a result, they play a key role in planning improvements. Governors have ensured that there are effective policies in place to tackle unsatisfactory teaching and have been rigorous in ensuring that these have been carried out. They also oversee the system to reward good teaching and have liaised closely with the headteacher in the annual review of teachers' work. Governors ensure that all current statutory regulations, for instance for the safeguarding of students, are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school, students typically behave sensibly and with due regard for the safety and welfare of others. They express a pride in their school and this shows through the tidy appearance of most students and the near absence of litter and graffiti. Students report that there is very little bullying but when there is, it is usually resolved quickly.
- The whole school focus on raising aspirations and improving learning skills is having a positive impact on achievement. Students are increasingly keen to do well in their learning. They have positive attitudes to their activities and this is helping them to make good progress. They are usually punctual to lessons and try hard to complete their work. Most do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Some students demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning and seek out ways to further their understanding and skills. Others are more reliant on their teachers and have yet to develop the confidence to extend their own learning.
- Students show considerable respect for others and there are few reported cases of discriminatory behaviour. Although a small minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour, evidence showed that these are largely unfounded and that behaviour is managed well in this large school.
- Students demonstrate tolerance for people who are different from themselves, reflecting the school's effective promotion of equality for all. In particular, students are caring and supportive of the students in the CAIRB. Consequently, these students feel safe and secure and behave well.
- There are many opportunities for student leadership. For example, the head girl and boy, student ambassadors and those involved in the Rotary Interact programme are all excellent role models. They make a significant contribution to the school and also to local and wider communities. The Rotary Interact group raise money for several charities through imaginative and successful fund-raising activities.
- The school has improved rates of attendance which are now close to the national average.
- The behaviour of students who attend college courses is good. The school checks attendance and behaviour consistently and regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All arrangements for safeguarding meet the statutory requirements and the corresponding policies are adhered to rigorously.
- There is an uncompromising focus on safety and risk is reduced as much as possible. Attendance rates have improved and are rising. The number of incidents of bullying and other unacceptable behaviour has been reduced significantly. Although the site is open, it is supervised well so that students are kept safe.
- Students understand the risks they may face in life, especially in regards to their health and safety,

including e-safety. They are prepared well to make informed choices. To prepare students more effectively for life in multicultural Britain, the school promotes tolerance and understanding of other faiths and cultures. This work is now being extended to increase students' awareness of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.

- The attendance and safety of students attending courses offsite are monitored diligently and because they are motivated, rarely miss any days at college.
- The CAIRB is a safe haven for students. They say they feel very secure.

The quality of teaching is good

- There has been considerable investment in improving the standard of teaching. Increasingly strong leadership and effective training for teachers have resulted in a rise in the quality of teaching and, consequently, of students' learning. The quality of teaching is not outstanding because improvements to teaching are relatively recent and have not yet had full impact on GCSE results.
- Teaching is usually very effective in helping students to make good progress. There has been a whole-school focus on questioning, marking and feedback to deepen students' understanding. Students increasingly demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Teachers provide students with ambitious targets from Year 7 onwards and clear guidance on how to achieve them.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is now consistently good. Literacy skills are promoted well in most subjects and reading is encouraged widely across the school. Initiatives to improve the quality of students' writing are proving successful, including in helping students to answer examination questions. The mathematical skills required to complete tasks successfully in other subjects, such as science and geography, are being taught effectively.
- Teaching is good in most subjects and is improving rapidly in modern languages. Further improvements are being made to raise standards of teaching and learning in design and technology.
- Teachers have been successful in helping most students to reach their potential, but not all. Sometimes teachers do not challenge and support students sufficiently to strive for the highest possible achievement, especially when students lack ambition for themselves. The school's work to raise aspirations is now having a significant impact on expectations and it is becoming the norm for students to aim high.
- A major drive to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students has involved using a range of methods. These include the Year 9 'Challenge the Gap' activities, summer school and coaching by older students. All are underpinned by a thorough knowledge of individual students and how well they are achieving. Teachers focus sharply on their learning needs and their aspirations so that they make rapid progress. Disadvantaged students currently in the school make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are given specific guidance in their learning mainly in normal lessons but sometimes in small-group work. They are well supported by subject-based teaching assistants who know students' learning needs well. Students supported through the CAIRB make good progress because of the expertise of the well-qualified specialist staff.
- Those who attend college courses are motivated and supported well to make good progress in their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, the attainment of students in GCSE results was just below the national average. Levels of progress showed improvement from previous years and were at least good and sometimes outstanding, often from low starting points.
- In both English and mathematics, students made good progress, although GCSE results in English were below the national average. In most other subjects, GCSE results were also below the national average. Nevertheless, except in modern languages, students made good progress from their starting points.
- The achievement of students currently in the school is rising rapidly. They make good or outstanding progress in nearly all subjects, including English and mathematics. This is because of the significant improvements made to the quality of teaching.
- Standards of teaching and learning in French and German have been too low but this has been addressed by the school and they have now improved. School leaders have recognised that achievement in design and technology remains too low and plans are in place to improve provision in this subject.
- The gaps in the GCSE achievement of disadvantaged students and that of others in the school and nationally have been too large. In 2014, as a group these students achieved just under one GCSE grade

lower in English and just under two GCSE grades in mathematics compared with others in the school and across the country. Around a half of all disadvantaged students made expected progress in English and mathematics compared with three quarters of others in the school and nationally.

- Disadvantaged students currently in the school are making accelerated progress and the gaps between their achievement and that of others in the school and nationally are closing. This is because of the highly effective work to improve the learning of this group and to increase their opportunities for success in life.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well. Although their attainment is sometimes low, they make very good progress in their learning. The achievement of students supported through the CAIRB is good because of the specialised teaching and guidance provided.
- The achievement of the most able students in the school is typically good. When they are given work to stretch their understanding and extend their skills, they make outstanding progress.
- Because the literacy levels of students joining the school are often below the national average, the school has made reading and writing a focus for every subject area. This is having a positive impact on achievement in all subjects, as well as English. Students' numeracy skills are developed well in a range of subjects.
- The achievement of students attending courses off site is typically good because they are motivated to learn and work hard. Most are successful in gaining qualifications in their work-related subjects and also in their general GCSE examinations.
- Students are no longer entered early for English and mathematics GCSE examinations. A very small number take art and photography GCSEs in Year 10 to enable them to develop their potential through AS-level studies in Year 11. The standard of achievement for these students is very high.

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	113548
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	463997

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ali Lucas
Headteacher	Andrew Lovett
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 October 2013
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