

ARK William Parker Academy

Parkstone Road, Hastings, TN34 2NT

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	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. It is not good because

- Leaders have not yet secured sufficient progress to ensure behaviour, teaching and achievement have improved enough to be good.
- Government funding to support disadvantaged students has not had sufficient impact over time to eliminate differences in achievement between disadvantaged students and their peers, although gaps are now narrowing.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is not developed across the curriculum.
- The academy acknowledges that it still has further work to do in order to engage with parents and the community.
- Where teaching fails to enthuse, engage or motivate students, their attitudes to learning are not good enough. Attendance is improving, but is still below national averages.
- Teaching requires improvement. It is not yet consistently good or better across all subjects and all years. Teachers' planning is variable; it does not always match the differing abilities of students and not all teachers have high enough expectations of what students' can achieve.
- Marking and feedback do not always support students in understanding what they need to do to improve. Some students do not take pride in their work and presentation is variable.
- The proportion of students gaining five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was below the national average in 2014.
- Disadvantaged students do not perform as well as their peers, and the progress of the most able students is not consistent across all of the subjects that they study.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the quality of teaching is variable, with significant inconsistency in student outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed Principal and the governing body have an accurate understanding of how the school is performing.
- Key Stage 4 provides a good range of academic and vocational qualifications to meet students' abilities and aspirations. The careers advice and support is effective.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding are very effective and child protection procedures are understood. Students say they feel safe and they are kept safe. The small number of parents responding to the online questionnaire agree. Students show a good level of respect towards each other as well as the school environment. Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly. Support for pupils who fall behind is effective in helping them to catch up.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook observations of students' learning in 30 lessons, including six observations which were jointly undertaken with senior members of staff. At the time of the inspection, students in Years 11 and 13 were on study leave, and students in Year 12 were on work experience.
- Inspectors met with students from all year groups including Year 11 and the sixth form. Discussions also took place informally with students during lessons and break times.
- Inspectors looked at the academy's website and scrutinised documentation, including safeguarding documentation, self-evaluation and development plans. They also looked at the academy's records for attendance, behaviour and exclusions.
- Inspectors reviewed the work in students' books covering English, mathematics and science, in order to check achievement and assessment.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector spoke with three members of the governing body (including the Executive Chair) and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors received 45 questionnaires completed by members of staff. They also considered the views of 33 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as further questionnaires from parents in Years 7 and 9.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Leonard	Additional Inspector
Patrick Robbins	Additional Inspector
Genevieve Usher	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- William Parker Academy is an average-sized single sex boys' secondary academy. The academy shares a sixth form with the neighbouring girls' secondary school, Helenswood Academy. The Chair of the Governing Body at the academy is also the Chair at Helenswood Academy, although the rest of the governing body is completely different. The Principal was appointed in 2015 and the previous Principal is now the Regional Director for the academy trust.
- The school converted to be an academy in September 2013 in conjunction with ARK which is an education charity running a network of academies. When its predecessor school, William Parker Sports College, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2012, it was judged to be inadequate. The academy has been adversely affected by staff turnover and falling rolls.
- The majority of students are White British, with smaller numbers of any other White background. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language are both in line with the national averages.
- The proportion of students supported by pupil premium funding is above the national average. Pupil premium is additional monies for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children. Approximately 126 Year 7 students, who did not attain Level 4 in either English or mathematics at the end of primary school, were eligible for catch-up funding.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average. The large majority of these students have behaviour or learning difficulties with smaller numbers having autistic spectrum disorders.
- A very small number of students are educated elsewhere at the College Central Pupil Referral Unit in St Leonards on Sea and the Eggtooth Project in Hastings.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good in order to raise achievement across all key stages by:
 - having high expectations of what students, especially disadvantaged students and the most able, can do and achieve
 - evaluating and developing strategies to accelerate the learning of disadvantaged students and sharing the successful ones across the academy
 - making sure that teaching enthuses, engages and motivates students so that low level disruption is eliminated
 - ensuring that teachers' marking and feedback provides clear advice on what students need to do to improve, and leads to improvements in the quality and presentation of their work.
- Improve the impact of leaders by:
 - ensuring they all have the same high expectations as the Principal
 - being clear how each subject and phase will become good or better, including mathematics and the sixth form
 - ensuring that pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students
 - making sure students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted across the curriculum
 - taking further steps to improve attendance so that it is in line with national averages, including by raising students' awareness of the importance of being in school developing better links with parents and the community.

An external review of the school'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

- Over time, leaders and managers throughout the academy have not ensured that all groups of students achieve as well as they should. Their work has not yet strengthened the quality of teaching sufficiently to ensure that it is consistently good across the academy.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged students has not been used successfully to ensure that gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers are minimal. The 2015 results indicate that the gaps are now narrowing.
- The recently appointed Principal provides very strong leadership, ambition and direction for the academy. He has begun to create a culture of higher expectations, both of staff and students. This is resulting in improvements to behaviour, teaching and, ultimately, achievement.
- Many leaders and managers, including governors, are ambitious for the school. However, this is not universal across the academy as some staff do not have high enough expectations of what students' can achieve.
- Senior leaders and governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. Self-evaluation is accurate and is supported by regular internal and external reviews of the academy.
- Senior staff demonstrate a clear and accurate awareness of teaching, learning and assessment. Monitoring is rigorous and regular, with the increasing involvement of middle leaders. Information collected from monitoring is used well to offer whole school and individual professional development.
- Middle leadership has been strengthened and middle leaders are better acquainted with their roles and responsibilities. They are now taking much more responsibility for achievement, behaviour and teaching in their own areas.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with a range of pathways designed to support students into education, training and employment. The increase in the number of English and mathematics lessons has had a positive impact on students' literacy, reading and mathematical skills.
- The curriculum in Key Stage 4 has an appropriate balance of academic and vocational qualifications which are well suited to students' abilities and aspirations. Students receive good support for option and career choices, allowing them to make informed decisions about their next steps.
- Students develop their awareness of life in modern Britain through assemblies, religious education and trips to the Houses of Parliament, Glyndebourne Opera and the Barbican Centre. Training has focused on countering extremist views towards migrants in the community. The academy promotes inclusion and equality of opportunity.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported through a range of activities, talks and trips, including 'Themes and thoughts for the week' which examines religious, social and moral themes. Music, art and sport offer further opportunities, but the academy acknowledges that this needs to be coordinated.
- Literacy across the curriculum is well supported across all subjects with attention to reading, writing and subject specific words. However, presentation in books is variable. Numeracy skills are supported across the curriculum in science.
- Pupil premium funding, amounting to £240,000 in the last academic year, is spent on one-to-one and small group intervention, as well as breakfast clubs, revision classes, extra-curricular provision and specialised resources. Year 7 catch-up funding is spent on providing small intervention groups in literacy and mathematics with some success, especially in English. However, disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- The academy has worked hard on engaging with parents and the community but acknowledges that more work needs to be done. Parental responses from Parent View were not all positive, but the academy's own surveys of parents in Year 7 and Year 9 suggest a much more supportive response from new parents.
- The academy receives good support from the academy trust which has provided regular reviews, staff training and links with other ARK schools.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students are well considered and meet all statutory requirements.
- Leaders have ensured that off-site and alternative provision are well organised. They enjoy good links with the providers and make sure that students' achievement is regularly checked alongside their attendance, behaviour and safety.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors have a thorough understanding of the issues facing the academy. Their active engagement with the academy has equipped them with information that enables them to challenge and support leaders effectively.
- They have a secure understanding of teachers' targets and appreciate the link between teachers' pay and the quality of teaching. They are knowledgeable about the academy's efforts to address underperformance in teaching.
- Governors know about and check how the additional funding for disadvantaged students is used. However, they accept that this funding has not had enough impact on raising standards for this group of students. They have a good understanding of students' achievement in comparison to national averages. They work cooperatively to ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students' attitudes to learning vary according to the quality of teaching they receive. This leads to some students losing concentration and not focusing well on their work and this slows their progress. Also, when expectations of them are not high, students do not always take pride in their work and their presentation deteriorates.
- Attendance rates are below national averages, but improving as a result of the academy's greater focus and determined engagement with parents. A good example of this is that parents are no longer able to leave absence messages on an answerphone, but have to speak with a member of staff. Attendance rates are similar for all students, including disadvantaged students. Punctuality to the academy and to lessons has improved considerably.
- The behaviour for learning policy is used across the academy and the new behaviour management system is having a positive impact on attendance, punctuality and conduct. Analysis of behaviour has allowed the academy to pinpoint specific behaviour issues and provide support mechanisms to minimise exclusions. The number of permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions is now falling.
- Most students are polite and well mannered. They show a good level of respect towards each other, as well as the school environment, so that the school site is mostly tidy and free from litter. Students confirm that behaviour seen during the inspection was typical of behaviour over time. There are good links with the providers of off-site and alternative provision to ensure students are well behaved, and most students attend well.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Arrangements to safeguard students fully meet current requirements. All staff are checked thoroughly to confirm their suitability to work with young people. Risk assessments are rigorously carried out, including for educational visits.
- Child protection arrangements are in place and up to date. Child protection procedures are understood. Case studies confirm that staff act promptly when concerns are raised. Student absence is rigorously pursued.
- The academy places great importance on students' well-being and personal development. The personal, social and health education programme ensures that students have a clear understanding of bullying including cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. Students say that they feel safe and well supported by the academy.
- The attendance, achievement, behaviour, safety and welfare of students educated off site are regularly checked.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good over time, across year groups and within subjects. In particular, teaching does not always challenge disadvantaged students and the most able students to achieve as well as they might.
- Teachers' planning of lessons does not always demonstrate high expectations, as tasks too often lack challenge. The same work is often set for all students. This means it is not always matched well enough to the abilities of students.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of students' written work shows that, when teachers have high expectations, students' work is presented well and students make good progress. However, expectations are inconsistent, leading

to variability in the quality of presentation and the progress being made.

- Nonetheless, teaching is improving. It is strongest in English and science, where lesson observations, students' work and academy data confirm improving achievement over time. In these areas, teachers have strong subject knowledge and an effective repertoire of behaviour management strategies. As a result, teachers' relationships with students are positive.

The quality of teachers' marking and feedback is inconsistent. Some teachers offer students extremely well-targeted and subject-specific feedback, which results in them making good improvements to their work. However, this is not always the case. Some marking and feedback seen did not guide students well enough on how they can improve. Teachers do not always check that advice offered has been acted upon by students.

- Reading and writing are supported well across many subjects, although presentation skills are not supported extensively across all subjects. Students are expected to apply their mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics, but numeracy is not promoted as strongly as literacy.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of students requires improvement because students' progress across a range of subjects is no more than expected. From starting points that are significantly below national averages, the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, was well below average in 2014.
- In Key Stage 4, the effect of previously poor learning on current achievement is still apparent, but the better teaching is helping to address this. Students' achievements in English and science are improving securely but, in others, for example mathematics, improvements are not quick enough.
- The proportion of students making and exceeding the expected progress in 2014 was in line with national averages in English and below national averages in mathematics. The proportion of students expected to make and exceed the expected progress in 2015 is predicted to improve, suggesting currently, students make good progress in English and mathematics.
- In the 2014 GCSE examinations, disadvantaged students did not attain as well as their peers. In English, these students were one and a half GCSE grades behind other students in the academy, although in line with the national average. In mathematics, disadvantaged students were one and a half grades behind other students and one third of a grade behind other students nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students making and exceeding the expected progress in 2014 was below national averages in English and mathematics. The proportion of disadvantaged students expected to make and exceed the expected progress in 2015 is predicted to improve.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to their peers, as their specific needs are well known and well supported by the school. Students with English as an additional language make better progress than their peers. The progress of students educated off site is similar to their peers, although numbers are small.
- The achievement of the most able students is not good because the work set for them is not sufficiently challenging. As a result, too few students gain the highest GCSE grades in their examinations across a range of subjects.
- In Key Stage 3, learning is variable, with better achievement in Year 7 than Year 8, and better achievement in Year 8 than Year 9. Variable teaching over time is being addressed and data tracking used to identify underperforming students and provide appropriate intervention. Catch-up funding is having a positive impact on students' literacy skills.
- The expected 2015 GCSE results are much more positive and the academy has worked tirelessly to ensure the accuracy and reliability of these predictions through regular testing, external validation and thorough moderation. The gap for disadvantaged students is narrowing. Gaps for other groups are indiscernible or difficult to confirm due to small numbers.
- Lesson observations, book scrutinies and available data substantiate the academy's anticipation of improved results. Lesson observations confirm that provision is now better matched to students' needs. Early intervention and extra revision are ensuring that students make rapid gains in order to catch up with where they should be.
- The academy does not generally enter students early for their GCSE examinations.

The sixth form provision requires improvement

- The recently appointed head of sixth form has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. The restructuring of the leadership team has already had an impact on consistency in enrolment procedures, increased use of data, the quality of teaching and expectations of students.
- In the past, not all students followed courses that were appropriate to their needs or abilities. The sixth form curriculum has been modified and entry requirements raised to ensure that all students are following appropriate courses. This provision ensures that current sixth form students are making better progress.
- Opportunities to develop personal, social and employability skills through high quality non-qualification activities and work experience opportunities are being extended. Students are knowledgeable about health and safety issues. Attendance rates and persistent absences are similar to national averages.
- Behaviour and safety in the sixth form are real strengths. Students' attitudes to the academy are exceptionally positive. Students work hard, show respect and enjoy being part of the academy community. For example, they were very keen to volunteer as ambassadors and help with taster lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is variable. Sixth form teachers have good subject knowledge and are effective in supporting students to develop. The academy acknowledges that teachers need to provide more frequent opportunity for discussion, and provide greater challenge for higher-achieving students.
- The curriculum in the sixth form is now broad and balanced. It is carefully personalised for students, including disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs. All students receive good quality advice, guidance and support when they join and leave the sixth form.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. There was significant variability in student outcomes across AS- and A-level subjects, reflecting the identified inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment.
- The 2014, AS- and A-level examination results were similar to national averages, with relatively fewer A* to B grades. Attainment on entry is below national norms and progress is similar to national averages. The expected results in 2015 suggest a further improvement in achievement covering all groups of students.
- All students entering the sixth form have a grade C or higher in GCSE mathematics. The very small number joining with a grade D in English receive extra tuition to improve their grades.
- The sixth form fully meets the current standards for 16 to 19 study programmes.

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	139821
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	450153

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	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	909
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Curtis
Principal	Daniel Hatley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01424 439888
Fax number	01424 461472
Email address	info@arkwilliamparker.org

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