

# Folkestone Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135195
<b>Local Authority</b>	NA
<b>Inspection number</b>	345497
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Ellis HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1266
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Roger De Haan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sean Heslop (Secondary), Mrs Helen Tait (Primary)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Academy Lane Folkestone Kent
<b>Telephone number</b>	01303 842400
<b>Fax number</b>	01303 842417
<b>Email address</b>	admin@folkestoneacademy.com

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent around 65% of their time observing learning, and 40 teachers were observed in 40 different lessons. Meetings were held with governors, staff, students, parents and carers. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and looked at: records of students' attainment and progress, self-evaluation documents, lesson-monitoring files, development plans, and information showing participation in physical activities, attendance and exclusions. They also evaluated responses to the inspection questionnaires from 144 students, 175 parents and carers and 58 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- progress for students who were identified by the academy as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- the quality of monitoring and evaluation of recent initiatives intended to raise attainment, and the accuracy and impact of self-evaluation at all levels
- the impact of the sixth form on the life of the academy
- the pace of improvement in the new primary section of the academy.

## Information about the school

Folkestone Academy opened in September 2007 and replaced the Channel School. The predecessor school provided for ages 11 to 16, but the academy opened for 11 to 18 year olds, with a new sixth form. In September 2009, a primary section was opened which replaced an adjacent primary school. Most of the students are White British, but one in eight come from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who do not speak English as a first language is close to the national average. Just over one quarter of the students are eligible for free school meals. Almost half have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is more than double the national average. Most students with additional needs have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and/or moderate learning difficulties. The academy has three specialisms.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

Folkestone Academy provides a satisfactory standard of education for students of all ages.

Attainment, although below the national average, is rising and students make satisfactory progress.

Good care, guidance and support have a positive impact on students' learning.

Students are well cared for and safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective.

Students are right to say they feel safe and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy.

There are good opportunities for students to contribute to the academy and the local community.

The academy is an inclusive school that promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well.

The primary section has made good progress in the short time since it was established.

Teaching is improving, but the good range of information about students' prior attainment and learning needs is not used consistently to ensure tasks, activities and support meet the needs of all students.

Most students behave well, but there are too many short-term exclusions and behavioural issues are not always dealt with fairly and consistently.

The quality of the academy's self-evaluation is too variable and the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently focused on the outcomes for different groups of students. Consequently, the academy has been over generous in its evaluation of the quality of teaching and other aspects of its work.

Leaders and managers have been effective in tackling some areas of underperformance and in raising attainment, and the academy's record demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers use information about students' prior attainment and barriers to learning in order to plan and deliver lessons that meet the needs of all students in the class.
  - Ensure that monitoring of teaching and learning is accurate and takes sufficient account of the outcomes achieved by different groups of students.
  - Ensure that behaviour management strategies are applied fairly and

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consistently.

- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students join the academy with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below those expected for their ages. Skills in reading and communication are particularly low. Primary-age children currently make satisfactory progress, but their progress is accelerating rapidly. Secondary-age students make satisfactory progress in most lessons and good progress in some. In a small minority of lessons, they do not make the progress that they should. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is improving and the proportion of students achieving five GCSE A\* to C grades has risen rapidly. Despite improvement, the proportion achieving five higher GCSE qualifications including mathematics and English has remained low, and well below the national average. In the sixth form, students make satisfactory progress and results in a few subjects are good. Attainment, overall, in the sixth form is below average.

All groups of students make similar progress, including those who do not speak English as a first language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Behaviour in lessons is mostly good, and students generally have good relationships with each other and with the adults in the classroom. A minority of students would like behaviour to be better and do not think that behaviour is managed consistently well by all staff. Although permanent exclusions have reduced significantly, the rate of fixed-term exclusion is too high and this has a negative impact on learning.

Consequently, behaviour is not above satisfactory.

Despite low levels of literacy and numeracy, and average attendance, students' development of personal skills, including teamworking, adequately prepares them for the next steps in their education or for employment. Almost all students continue their education or go in to employment after leaving the school.

Students of all ages demonstrate an understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Many are active participants in the wide range of sporting activities which the academy makes available. They are confident to talk to staff if they have a problem.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

In a minority of lessons, teaching builds well on previous learning. Teachers provide interesting tasks and activities that include good opportunities for students to discuss and evaluate their progress towards challenging targets. Too many lessons are no better than satisfactory because the pace of learning is modest, tasks and activities are not closely matched to students' needs, and expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough. Students regularly spend too long listening passively to the teacher and lack the opportunity to become active and independent learners. Marking of students' work is inconsistent. Examples of helpful feedback to students were seen across the academy, but this is not fully embedded and some marking was perfunctory. The primary section recognises that the curriculum is underdeveloped. It lacks strong links between subjects and does not provide enough scope to accelerating the pace of learning. Steps are being taken to match the secondary curriculum more closely to the needs and interests of students, and a new Year 7 curriculum is being developed for September 2010. A broad range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum and these opportunities are well attended. The arts, media and European culture specialisms are having an impact on raising attainment, but the academy acknowledges that much more development is possible.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a clear commitment to improvement, and share their vision for the future of the academy with staff and students. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the primary section is good and senior leaders have an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Staff in the primary section feel empowered to contribute to improvement and a very positive ethos and climate for learning are developing well. Middle leaders make a significant contribution to monitoring and evaluation in the secondary section. Some middle leaders accurately evaluate strengths and weakness in their areas of responsibility, and their incisive self-evaluation is driving improvement. However, the impact of middle leadership is too variable. Overall judgements of the quality of teaching and learning are over optimistic.

The trustees contribute a wide range of expertise and experience to the governance of the academy. They provide good leadership in the strategic development of the academy and are involved in evaluating and challenging low attainment. Staff, and parents and carers report that they would welcome closer contact with governors.

Child protection arrangements are thorough and meticulous and good practice is adopted across all parts of the academy. The curriculum is being developed so that students will have better opportunities to develop a strong understanding of how to keep safe and evaluate risks.

The academy pursues ambitious strategies to ensure that all groups of students are free from negative discrimination. The actions taken are narrowing any gaps that appear between outcomes for different groups. However, the academy is not complacent and areas have been identified where further development is required.

Strong partnerships are developing to support learning and can go further yet. The academy is collaborating with other local academies to develop a residential centre in north-west France. Inspectors observed an interesting healthcare day for Year 7 that involved contributions from a range of healthcare partners.

The academy knows the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context of its community well. Senior leaders have planned a series of actions to promote community cohesion and to engage with community groups in the local and wider community. For example, the restaurant is open to the local community on three days each week and feedback from users is positive. Although the impact of strategies to promote community cohesion within the academy is felt strongly, initiatives at a national and international level are still at the early stages of development.

Links are being sought with parents and carers, particularly those who have not previously engaged with the academy. A parents' and carers' forum has been established to get their views about important issues.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a welcoming environment and an interesting outside area is being developed to provide opportunities for children to develop in all areas of learning. Difficulties with the structure of the building have prevented the inside spaces from being developed to the same level. Children make satisfactory progress in relation to their low starting points but standards for many are likely to be below average by the start of Key Stage 1. Children are provided with a satisfactory mix of adult-led and child-selected activities. Staff have appropriate knowledge of how children learn and of their welfare requirements. Children are happy, well behaved and kept safe. Each member of staff takes responsibility for a small group of children, and learners' achievements are systematically observed and recorded. Staff work together as a team, and children engage confidently in groups and with their own individual tasks. One group of children participated enthusiastically in preparing a role-play linked to their recent trip to Dover Castle. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader correctly identifies that the overall effectiveness is satisfactory and is seeking ways to make further improvements.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with attainment that is generally lower than that in most sixth forms. Attainment is improving, but examination results in 2009 were generally below the national average. Progress differs across different courses and tracking data show some students have already fallen behind their targets. Overall, progress is satisfactory. Students have opportunities to contribute to the academy community as members of tutor groups which include students from Years 7 to 13, and in leadership roles working with younger students, including those in the primary section of the academy.

The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory, but varies from sound to outstanding. It is not consistently good enough to ensure that students make good progress across all courses. The curriculum has been improved and there is now a wider range of Level 1 and Level 2 courses available to meet students' needs. Vocational options are provided in catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Diploma courses are being developed in music technology, performing arts and sports to extend future students' learning opportunities.

There have been a number of changes to the leadership and management of the sixth form since the academy opened. Current leadership arrangements have been in place for a very short time and have only recently begun to identify and remedy weaknesses in the sixth form.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers that responded to the inspection

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questionnaire are happy with their children's experiences at the academy. A small but significant number do not feel that the academy deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and does not take their concerns seriously. Inspectors noted that management of behaviour was not always consistent but found no evidence to suggest that concerns were not taken seriously.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Folkestone Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 175 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1266 students registered at the academy.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	43	82	47	14	8	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	87	50	82	47	4	2	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	42	88	50	8	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	40	89	51	9	5	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	68	39	90	51	8	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	39	87	50	13	7	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	38	98	56	4	2	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	55	31	94	54	9	5	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	33	101	58	9	5	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	33	91	52	10	6	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	27	97	55	10	6	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	74	42	87	50	4	2	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	46	79	45	12	7	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



12 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Folkestone Academy, Folkestone, CT19 5FP

Thank you for the help that you gave us when we inspected your academy and particular thanks go to those of you who took time to talk to us or to complete the inspection questionnaire. You told us that you feel safe and well cared for, and we saw that most of you are making satisfactory progress in your learning.

Here are some of the things you do best.

You take up the good opportunities available to you to contribute to the academy and to the wider community.

You are well looked after and given the support you need to help you to develop as responsible and well behaved young people.

The academy has developed some good partnerships with other schools and agencies to help improve your learning.

Here are the things that are to be improved.

We would like your teachers to make sure that they assess how well you are doing and use the information that they have about you to plan work that is interesting and at exactly the right level so that you can make good progress.

We want the academy's leaders to make sure that they have a more accurate view of what is going well and what needs to improve so that the pace of improvement can be increased and you can all make good progress.

You told us that some students do not behave as well as they might and that behaviour is not always managed fairly and consistently. So we are asking your academy to make sure that all students knows what is expected of them and that the system of rewards and punishments is operated fairly.

I am sure that you will want to play your part by working hard and helping your teachers with these and other improvements. I hope you will find time to read the full report.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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