

Testwood Sports College

Testwood Lane, Totton, Southampton, SO40 3ZW

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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 has rapidly established a culture of high expectations and brought about substantial changes that have improved students' achievement.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the rate and quality of improvements. They share the headteacher's high expectations.
- Curriculum leaders make a positive contribution to making the academy better by improving the quality of teaching in their departments.
- Students' achievement has strongly improved due to better teaching. It is particularly strong in Key Stage 3.
- Leaders carefully track students' progress towards very challenging targets, which are based on all students making better than expected progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Leaders' close monitoring has ensured that students eligible for additional funding and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3.
- The quality of teaching is good because teachers know each student's strengths and weaknesses. They use this to provide effective one-to-one guidance, which helps students learn better.
- Teachers question students probingly to ensure they understand the tasks set and intervene effectively if students are struggling. This ensures students make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers have implemented academy-wide approaches to assessment and marking very well. This has helped students to improve their work.
- Teaching in humanities is consistently good, especially the teaching of writing skills and this has led to improved achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Students behave well and the academy is calm, orderly and free from litter or graffiti.
- Leaders' actions to keep children safe are effective. Leaders make good use of support from external partners.
- Governors have significantly improved the methods they use to learn about the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They use their more detailed knowledge to challenge the academy to do even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of science lessons, teachers do not provide students with enough help to explain key scientific concepts effectively in writing.
- Some teachers do not support students enough to improve their writing by rigorously following up on the spelling, punctuation and grammar errors they identify in students' work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 26 lessons. They were accompanied by senior leaders in nine of them. Inspectors made short visits to classrooms accompanied by the literacy coordinator.
- The inspectors observed the academy’s work, met separately with groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4, looked at students’ work in their books during lessons and separately scrutinised a selection of students’ work.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the academy’s own data about students’ progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding records, the academy’s own analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve, the academy’s records of its monitoring of teaching, teachers’ lesson plans and information about students’ achievement in different teaching groups. Inspectors took account of the views of 49 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors interviewed a group of parents and carers.
- Inspectors analysed 30 questionnaires from staff, including support staff.
- Evidence from Ofsted’s previous monitoring visits was also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, Lead inspector

Mary Hoather

Stephanie Matthews

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The headteacher joined the academy in May 2014. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors were appointed in January 2015.
- At the start of the summer term in 2015, two new deputy headteachers were appointed, both of whom teach science.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- Almost one in three students is eligible for additional pupil premium funding. The proportion of students eligible for this funding is the same as the national average. This is additional government funding which supports students known to be eligible free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- Five students follow part-time courses at The Forest Education Centre, of which the headteacher is a governor.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy has worked with a range of partner schools. Its key partner has been The Arnewood School.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Ensure all students make the rapid progress of which they are capable in science, by improving the quality of students' writing so students can explain scientific concepts and processes with greater clarity and accuracy.
- Share the effective approaches used in the academy to ensure all teachers follow up on spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors in students' writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has very high expectations of students' attitudes, conduct and achievement. She has worked effectively with all staff, including senior and middle leaders, to ensure they share her high expectations and has consequently rapidly brought about many changes that have improved the academy.
- Longer-standing senior leaders have substantially improved their practice. New senior leaders have ensured they can seamlessly continue to make improvements where their predecessors left off. The headteacher rigorously and regularly checks the quality of their work. As a result, the leadership team is highly effective; its members carry out their roles and responsibilities to a high standard.
- Senior leaders work in conjunction with curriculum leaders to make regular and thorough checks on the quality of teaching, its impact on learning, and students' behaviour in lessons. They do this by surveying students' views as well as observing lessons and checking students' work in books. Consequently, they have a very accurate view of where strengths and weaknesses lie. Senior leaders have been scrupulous in following up areas that need development, including those relating to teachers' management of students' behaviour. As a result, there is a high degree of consistency in teachers' adoption of agreed approaches to teaching, marking of students' work and managing students' behaviour.
- Senior leaders hold curriculum leaders to account for the achievement of students in the subject areas they oversee. They conduct regular meetings with subject leaders in which they make good use of information on students' progress towards very demanding targets to challenge leaders to make changes and do better.
- Dedicated team leaders effectively manage teachers' performance. They set and monitor targets for a small group of teachers who are all at similar points on the pay scale. This enables targets to be appropriately focused so that teachers' pay progression is clearly linked to ensuring students make very good progress.
- Curriculum leaders make a strong contribution to improving the academy. They analyse information on the proportion of students who are meeting their very challenging targets and use it well to identify students who need extra support. For example, as result of the mathematics curriculum leader's careful analysis of tracking data, students in Year 8 who had made poor progress since joining the academy were placed in a new group dedicated to securing the rapid progress needed for them to catch up. The vast majority of students in this dedicated group have caught up.
- Curriculum leaders rapidly and effectively improve the quality of teaching in the departments they manage. They make regular and thorough checks on teaching and promptly provide additional guidance for teachers who need extra support, including well-planned guidance from leaders with expertise in partner schools.
- The academy's leaders have introduced a broad range of additional classes, activities and support measures that have ensured that students eligible for additional funding make good progress and attend well. Senior leaders closely track the impact of this funding on students' achievement. Consequently, the gap in achievement between students eligible for additional funding and others is closing.
- Leaders ensure that the academy's values of tolerance, a sense of fair play and being considerate to all are continuously promoted through, for example, assemblies and regular opportunities for all students to share their opinions about the academy with its leaders. The greatly improved achievement of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is testament to how well the academy ensures equality of opportunity. Leaders' very robust responses to the rare occasions that students treat each other unfairly have discouraged other students and helped reinforce the academy's positive values. As a result, the academy is largely free from discrimination.
- The academy carefully tracks the areas of the curriculum in which students' social, spiritual, moral, and cultural understanding is developed. This means that students access their learning in these areas through a wide variety of subjects by, for example, studying the origins of the Notting Hill Carnival in travel and tourism. These opportunities are enhanced through a raft of leadership roles for students, as well as after-school music and drama clubs.
- Leaders ensure fundamental British values are explicitly promoted. All assemblies are planned carefully so they have a clearly defined message about values. These, along with additional activities such as a mock election, debating club, and trips to theatres to see plays which tackle current issues, contribute significantly to students gaining a thorough understanding of the values upon which our society is built.
- Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is broad enough to meet students' needs and have made recent changes so students make better progress. Halfway through this academic year, Key Stage 3 students were regrouped according to their ability in each subject rather than being placed in a top or

lower stream for all their subjects based on their Key Stage 2 scores. This has had a very positive effect on students' self-esteem and raised expectations.

- Leaders have also made changes to enable more students take a language at GCSE so they can access the English Baccalaureate qualification. The more able are well catered for through additional qualifications available in mathematics and opportunities to enter competitions, such as a computing competition. In Year 7, students with special educational needs are taught a combined curriculum covering humanities and English, which effectively supports them in developing better literacy skills.
- The headteacher and leaders have made very effective use of their local knowledge to ensure support from other schools is precisely targeted where it is needed most. This has included curriculum leaders working with their counterparts in good schools to gauge the accuracy of teachers' marking, and substantial support for teachers in mathematics and science from leaders in the academy's key partner school.
- Leaders work closely with alternative provision coordinators to ensure that students achieve well and have good attendance. This close partnership is enhanced by the fact that the headteacher is a governor at The Forest Education Centre, the provision where a very small number of students from the academy are educated.
- The leadership of careers education is effective; it is delivered through an extensive programme, which includes visits to colleges, and mock interviews for colleges, as well as independent advice. The academy has re-focused the careers programme delivered in tutor time so it broadens students' horizons. A successful careers day for Year 9 students has been introduced to ensure students choose GCSEs that support their raised careers aspirations.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - Under the leadership of the new Chair and Vice-Chair, governors have worked very well with leaders to make changes that have substantially improved the academy. Governors now find out for themselves about the academy's strengths and weaknesses by visiting the academy to see students at work, meeting with subject leaders, and asking subject leaders to present reports at governors' meetings. The governors use this information to ask very probing questions of academy leaders. This approach has helped them gain a deep and accurate view of the academy. As result of their robust evaluations, they have asked the academy to make further improvements.
 - Governors make good use of data, which compare the achievement of the academy's students with other students nationally. They have used their recent training well to analyse this information rigorously. They now have much higher expectations of how well the academy's students should achieve. They also effectively review the impact of the academy's spending on the progress of students eligible for additional funding and ask for changes to be made to activities that are not as effective.
 - Governors closely oversee the setting and monitoring of teachers' performance targets to ensure teachers' pay is linked closely to the quality of their teaching and its impact on students' achievement.
 - The governors fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties and regularly check that the academy's leaders are responding effectively to safeguarding concerns.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students in lessons and around the academy is generally calm and orderly. The vast majority of students display positive attitudes to learning. They respect their teachers, each other and the academy environment, which is litter free and has no graffiti. They wear their new uniform with pride and value the sports facilities, including the extensive playing fields.
- Students spoken to were proud to display the specially designed badges that indicate success in academic subjects as well as sports and leadership. They said that behaviour has improved at the academy, and value the rewards and incentives they are given for this.
- Students make a positive contribution to ensuring all forms of bullying are kept to an absolute minimum. Some older students belong to ABC (anti-bullying crew), a group of students trained to help other students who are anxious or need guidance about bullying. Students spoken to across different year groups all said the academy is a safe place to learn and students are free from discrimination.
- Students follow the instructions given by their teachers and respond well when asked to improve their conduct. The vast majority of teachers use shared approaches to managing behaviour effectively.
- Where students need further support to manage their behaviour, heads of year ensure they are provided with the additional help they need. The heads of year involve parents well and make good use of external agencies.

- Leaders in the academy regularly contact their counterparts in the alternative provision centre accessed by a small number of students to check these students are behaving well and kept safe. A notable example of the quality of this partnership is the way leaders liaise on a daily basis to ensure students who are leaving alternative provision to return to the academy, or vice versa, make a smooth transition.
- Leaders monitor attendance closely and it is rising rapidly. Attendance for the current academic year is just below national average. Attendance is not quite at national average because a very small number of students have considerable barriers to attending. The academy has worked well with external partners in order to support these students.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The headteacher, who has significant experience, works with a dedicated safeguarding leader to ensure students are kept safe and free from harm. All staff are provided with a detailed safeguarding guide which includes the policy as well as what to do if students disclose concerns. This booklet contains well-presented training materials which are used on a one-to-one basis with staff who have missed the whole-staff training.
- The academy's leaders have close working relationships with local authority social service managers, whom they know well. Leaders work effectively in partnership with the authority to support students in the academy who have significant needs. The academy's safeguarding leaders check the progress and diligence with which the local authority acts upon the referrals they make.
- The academy's leaders have a very good knowledge of safeguarding issues in the community that the academy serves. To ensure students are fully informed of the specific risks within the locality, community police officers have led assemblies and met with students and their parents.
- The academy has an effective programme of activities and events to ensure students keep safe when online and are fully aware of the dangers of being groomed and radicalised when using the internet.
- The academy works well with looked after children and has met their needs by providing opportunity and appropriate space for looked after children to receive the additional guidance and support they need, including family time with their siblings.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved and is now typically good. Teachers know their students very well and support them using a wide range of effective approaches. Students and parents value the quality and frequency of this additional assistance, which helps students learn better.
- Teachers use information about students' progress towards challenging targets effectively. They identify students who are falling behind on their detailed seating plans and provide additional support for them throughout the lesson, targeting their questions at them, making frequent checks to ensure they understand the work, and providing them with additional resources so they can complete their work to a good standard.
- Teaching in English is consistently strong because the curriculum leader has made good use of training from external partners, including from a local specialist leader of education to develop teachers' subject expertise at teaching GCSE English. Teachers make very good use of GCSE model A* answers which students carefully analyse to see for themselves how they meet the standards set out in the examination mark scheme. Consequently, students are very clear about the criteria used by examiners to mark their work and how best to meet them. This has led to improved achievement in English at Key Stage 4.
- Teachers are skilled at ensuring the work they set is stretching enough and accessible. For example, in English, less-able Key Stage 3 students were able to conceptualise the differences between narrative structures in books and films. This was because the teacher had thoughtfully chosen the film they were watching and the book they were reading, so both texts explored challenging themes in an engaging way. In a geography lesson, the teacher helped less-able students make rapid progress by providing information on river beds in different forms, including photographs and diagrams, as well as written extracts. The tasks she set on the sources ensured students fully engaged with each and could also combine them to arrive at a more holistic understanding of the geographical processes.
- Teaching in humanities is consistently strong. The faculty leader has shared the effective approaches he has developed to ensure students can digest fully and respond critically to the body of knowledge that humanities subjects require. These approaches are now successfully used across the humanities faculty. Consequently, students make good progress in humanities, including those who enter the school with low reading ages.
- Teachers question students well and use a wide array of different types of questions to check students' learning, tease out misconceptions, and enable students to evaluate their own ideas and those of others.

In a mathematics lesson, the teacher provided a set of 'quick-fire' additional challenges on coordinates to stretch more-able students, while continuing targeting students with probing questions. This approach helped those who were struggling to grasp the topic better and unpick their misconceptions.

- Teaching in mathematics is good. Teachers use regular assessments to identify sharply where students' gaps in learning are. Consequently, students are very clear about the areas in which they have weaker understanding and work alongside their teachers to gain the knowledge needed to feel secure in the topic. As a result, students make good progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 3.
- The way teachers use their assessment of students' work is highly consistent and effective. Students complete half-termly tasks under examination conditions. Teachers thoroughly mark this work and use their detailed feedback comments to set students targets for their next piece of work. Students make very good use of these targets, collating them on dedicated proforma which they use to achieve greater success in their next assessed pieces. This has helped many students meet their targets and improve their learning.
- In many subjects, teachers include follow-up tasks or suggest that students complete additional questions as part of their written feedback on marked work. In English, humanities, and business studies and most other subjects, these are done well because teachers give students time to do them and check they are completing them to a high standard. As a result, most students learn a great deal from responding to their marked work.
- The literacy coordinator has successfully promoted reading through a pilot project, which involves Year 7 students reading daily and answering questions on the books they read. This effectively encourages students to read more widely and supports other programmes the academy runs to improve the reading skills of targeted Year 7 students.
- Teachers identify spelling, punctuation and grammar errors when they mark students' work. However, not all teachers rigorously follow up on students' mistakes to ensure students learn from their errors. Consequently, the accuracy of students' writing has improved well in some subjects, especially in humanities, but not in all subjects.
- In some subjects, most notably humanities, teachers successfully help students to develop their writing skills so they can express their ideas well in extended pieces of writing and achieve high standards. As a result, students in humanities can confidently explain their ideas about historical events, geographical phenomena and religious doctrines in extended written tasks. This prepares students well for the challenges of GCSE. However, in a small number of subjects, most notably science, insufficient attention is paid to ensuring students have the writing skills they need to achieve well.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students do well at the academy and gain the skills and knowledge to succeed in their next steps. As a result, the vast majority progress to further education, training or employment.
- Students who took their GCSE examinations in 2014 entered the academy with levels of attainment similar to national average and made average progress. As a result, the proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was in line with national expectations. However, this represents a significant improvement from 2013 when students' achievement was well below average.
- In 2014, students made good progress in English and average progress in mathematics. The current Year 11 entered the academy with Key Stage 2 levels that were significantly below average. They make very good progress in English and good progress in mathematics, due to better teaching and additional after-school and weekend classes.
- Students achieve well in most lessons; they gain good subject knowledge and have the opportunity to hone their skills through the formal examinations that they take in Key Stage 3. These examinations have enabled students to become more adept at revision and tackling questions under the pressure of time. Consequently, in Key Stage 3, students' progress in both English and mathematics is good and most students are on track to meet their very challenging targets.
- The academy has focused on ensuring predictions are robust and teachers' assessments are accurate. It uses mock examinations and test papers in all year groups, as well as careful analysis of how accurate their predictions have been in the past. Very good use is made of partner schools and teachers who are GCSE examiners to check that marking is in line with national standards.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment and progress between those eligible for additional funding and others, both nationally and within the academy, was too wide. In terms of attainment, it was almost two whole GCSE grades in English and one and a half in mathematics. In 2014, students eligible for funding made better progress and attained more highly than in 2013 and the gap reduced. In English, the attainment gap

when compared with others in the academy and nationally narrowed to just under one GCSE grade. In mathematics, disadvantaged students achieved half a grade lower when compared to other students in the academy, and a grade lower than all other students nationally. Since last academic year, however, gaps have reduced further and the achievement of disadvantaged students has improved, especially in Years 10 and 11.

- The academy's leaders have ensured that the additional funding for disadvantaged students has been well targeted to benefit students throughout the academy. In Key Stage 3, students eligible for additional funding achieve well and make good progress. In English and mathematics, the majority of this group are on track to meet the challenging targets the academy sets. The gap between the proportion of disadvantaged students meeting these targets and others is narrower in Year 8 than in Year 9. In the current Year 7, it has closed completely in mathematics and very nearly closed in English.
- In 2014 GCSE examinations, more-able students' achievement was broadly in line with national averages for most subjects. The progress of this group in mathematics was not good, based on their starting points. More-able students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress, including in mathematics, and many more of them are on track to meet their challenging targets than last year. Changes to the way students are grouped in Key Stage 3 have led to improved progress for more-able students and the majority are on track to meet their challenging targets.
- In 2014, early entry was used in mathematics. Although it provided some more-able students with the chance to take additional mathematics qualifications after completing their GCSE examination, this was not a successful strategy for this group because they did not make good progress. No students are currently being entered early for their GCSE examinations, although more-able students in Year 11 still have the opportunity to take additional qualifications in mathematics.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress overall in Key Stage 4 and very good progress in Key Stage 3. In Year 7, this group of students makes better progress than their peers. This is due to the effective support for their literacy delivered through the combined humanities and English curriculum, which focuses on improving students' reading and writing skills.
- Careful monitoring and close liaison with college staff mean that students attending part-time alternative provision make good progress in the range of qualifications provided. These qualifications include GCSEs and vocational courses, for example land-based studies, that have been chosen to help students to develop their sense of self-worth and well-being.
- Students who entered Year 7 below Level 4 make good progress in a range of literacy and numeracy interventions designed to help them catch up.
- Students' writing is of a high quality in humanities and some other subjects because teachers help students to express and structure their ideas so the quality of their written expression is not a barrier to their achievement. In some science classes, students do not explain their ideas clearly enough in their writing, which means they do not achieve as highly as they are capable of doing.

What inspection judgements mean

Academy		
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 academy, 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	137315
Inspection number	461466

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	694
Chair	Mrs Dawn Bushrod
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Pitman
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 November 2013
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