

Westfield Academy

Stiby Road, Yeovil, BA21 3EP

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

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 Principal, ably supported by senior leaders, has ensured that the academy has continued to improve since the previous inspection. As a result, students' achievement and the quality of teaching are now good.
- Students achieve well in most subjects. The progress students make in English has risen significantly.
- Disadvantaged students and those entering the academy with low levels of attainment receive high quality, personalised support. As a result, they achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good. Relationships in classrooms and around the academy are strong. Students respect their teachers, feel confident to ask questions and to offer their thoughts and ideas when discussing new concepts.
- Students conduct themselves well around the academy, including at social times. They are polite and courteous and create a calm and purposeful atmosphere.
- Students feel safe and are confident that the academy will act swiftly to resolve any issues they may encounter. They respond well to restorative approaches to enable them to understand the consequences of their actions and behaviour.
- Leaders and managers at the academy have high expectations of both staff and students. Staff receive effective support and training to develop the quality of their teaching. They are held closely to account for the achievement of the students they teach.
- The governing body is passionate about ensuring the academy continues to improve. The governors have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and areas that need to develop further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, learning activities planned by staff do not always enable students to make the best possible progress.
- Whilst the quality of feedback and marking has improved, not all students are equally well informed of how well they have done and the steps they need to take to improve their learning further.
- Students are not always given time to reflect on, and respond to, teachers' feedback and marking so that they can demonstrate that they know how to improve their learning.
- Attendance is not yet above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 episodes of teaching and conducted short visit to classrooms. Six of these observations were conducted jointly alongside senior leaders from the academy.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, leaders with responsibility for subjects, members of the governing body and groups of students. A discussion took place with the local authority designated officer and with students at break and lunch times.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for looked after children, those having free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on students’ achievement, the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, minutes of meetings, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 56 responses to the online Parent View survey and 57 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Simon Rowe, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jackie Jones

Additional Inspector

Philip Storey

Additional Inspector

Teresa Hill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westfield Academy is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportions of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are both lower than average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of students receiving special educational needs support is above average.
- A significant proportion of students join the academy at times other than the start of Year 7.
- Some students receive their education at The Horizon Pupil Referral Unit, Long Sutton Autism Base and The Medical Tuition Centre.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by ensuring:
 - all teachers plan activities that enable students to make the best possible progress
 - teachers' feedback and marking consistently inform students of how well they have done and the next steps they need to take to improve their learning further
 - students are given the time to reflect on and respond to teachers' feedback and marking so that they can demonstrate that they know how to improve their learning.
- Raise students' attendance by ensuring that an in-depth analysis of absence information for disadvantaged students and other groups is conducted to identify potential patterns and trends so that targeted support can be provided.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, students' achievement and the quality of teaching have improved and are now good. Every member of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire indicated that they are proud to be a member of staff at the academy.
- The academy sets challenging targets for students and collects accurate information on their progress. This information is used to ensure that students at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and effective support is put in place to enable them to catch up.
- The academy's self-evaluation is accurate. It accurately identifies the strengths of the academy and key areas in need of further development. Clear and effective development plans, with challenging targets, are in place to bring about further improvement.
- Central to the improvements at the academy has been the relentless approach of leaders to improve the quality of teaching. Robust procedures are in place to check on staff performance, which ensure that they are held rigorously to account for students' achievement. There is a range of effective training opportunities for staff to attend to to improve their teaching. Staff are fully appreciative of these and recognise how they have improved their teaching as a result.
- During joint observations, inspectors found that the senior staff at the academy have a clear understanding of the most effective elements of teaching and also how teaching can be improved further. Teachers new to the profession speak favourably about the support they receive.
- Leaders in charge of subjects have been given more responsibility recently, including overseeing the performance of each member of staff in their department, to further develop their leadership skills. These leaders have a very clear understanding of the performance of their departments and closely monitor the quality of teaching, students' achievement and the quality of work in books. The quality of feedback and marking, however, is still inconsistent across the academy.
- The range of subjects provided for students is broad and balanced. There is an appropriate mix of both academic and work-related courses on offer. The academy designs its choice of courses around each cohort of students to ensure that it is closely tailored to their interests and needs.
- Through a variety of subjects, visitors and assemblies, students receive highly effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students talk knowledgeably of a series of assemblies which were linked to famous British people. They voted Emmeline Pankhurst as their favourite Briton and explained that they acknowledged the positive impact she had on British democracy.
- A wide range of activities beyond the classroom is available for students, including a variety of sports, arts, drama and dance. There are also opportunities for students to study subjects more deeply or to receive extra tuition. Every student is well known and cared for and is given equal opportunity of success. Students appreciate these opportunities and fully utilise them. Through diversity week and other opportunities, students understand the culture, beliefs and customs of people in other countries and parts of Britain.
- Careers guidance is well developed. Students undertake work experience which is closely linked to their aspirations and interests. They visit colleges and universities and this raises their aspirations of what they are able to achieve in the future.
- Students enjoy taking on responsibilities at the academy. Year 11 students regularly visit other tutor groups to help younger students settle well at the academy, or to help with reading. The student council feels valued and can cite many initiatives that it has instigated to change the academy for the better, including the building of a new all-weather sports pitch.
- The academy is part of the Somerset Challenge, through which leaders of schools in Somerset come together to plan support for each other. The academy has not, as yet, used this support for itself, but it does offer effective support for other schools with regard to music and design and technology. The academy has used the local authority designated officer and human resources services. They describe both of these as effective services.
- The academy purchases support from a school improvement partner. He is providing effective challenge to the academy's leaders and also conducts regular reviews of aspects of the academy.
- The academy has highly effective safeguarding processes and procedures. The leadership carries out the relevant checks on staff and record keeping is meticulous.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is passionate about ensuring the academy continues to improve. Governors have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and areas that need to develop further, particularly with regard to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. They provide an appropriate level of

challenge and support to senior leaders to maintain improvements. They undergo regular training to ensure they have the appropriate up-to-date skills and knowledge. Governors implement a strict pay policy, ensuring that they reward the best practitioners and withhold pay awards for any underperformance. They are aware of the positive impact that the extra government funding is having on raising achievement. They do not, however, have a clear enough understanding of how this money is allocated. All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students conduct themselves well at the academy, both in and out of lessons. They are polite and courteous and their behaviour leads to a positive atmosphere permeating the academy.
- Students wear their uniform well, are punctual and arrive to school with the correct equipment. They take pride in their school and there is little evidence of graffiti or litter.
- Students indicate that the academy's reward system motivates them to do their best. Students are able to receive a stamp in every lesson if they arrive on time, bring the correct equipment, and work to the best of their ability.
- Disruptive behaviour in lessons is rare. The academy provides effective support for all students through non-teaching heads of house. These members of staff oversee students' behaviour, attendance and academic progress and ensure timely and effective support as and where appropriate.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students feel safe and have a strong understanding of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet. Students are confident that, if they did have a problem, the academy would deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Exclusions have reduced significantly at the academy. Staff and students attribute this to the restorative approaches that the academy is adopting, which enable students to be held to account for any poor behaviour by holding a meeting to discuss their actions and the consequences of this. As well as the proportions of exclusions decreasing, the number of students who repeat poor behaviour has reduced.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The academy has not yet refined its analysis of absence data to analyse key trends and patterns in the attendance of key students and groups of students. Consequently, extra carefully-targeted support is not able to be planned to improve attendance further.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typified by teachers' enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to assess students' understanding and to deepen their learning.
- Good relationships between teachers and students are a key feature at the academy. Students respond quickly to teachers' instructions, allowing learning time to be maximised.
- Over time, teachers have established clear expectations of the standard of behaviour and work, developing high quality learning environments. These provide students with the confidence to ask questions and to offer their thoughts and views on new concepts and ideas.
- Students enjoy being challenged. They work well in groups, on their own and with each other. They show great determination and resilience to succeed.
- Other adults receive regular, effective training. This enables them to provide good support to students both in and out of lessons.
- Occasionally, the learning activities planned by teachers do not always account for the full ability range within their class and the work set is too easy.
- The quality of feedback and marking that teachers provide to students has improved since the previous inspection. At its best, students use examination mark schemes and guidance from their teachers to identify the level that they are working at and how they can improve. This is not, however, consistent across the academy. At times, feedback and marking are not specific enough to ensure students know how to move their learning forward. Also, students are not routinely given time to reflect on and respond to their teachers' feedback.
- The very large majority of the parents who responded to the Parent View survey feel that their child is taught well. Inspectors agree with this.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students who enter the academy in Year 7 arrive with levels of attainment in line with, or just below, the national average. A significant number of students join the academy at times other than the start of Year 7. Many of these students arrive with complex social and emotional needs and have had disrupted experiences of education in other schools; they are well supported by the academy. The proportion of Year 11 students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen over the last three years, and was above the national average in 2013.
- The progress students make across most subjects, including English and mathematics, is usually good. The proportion of students who make good progress in English has risen to be well above the national average. Achievement in music and design and technology is high. Students have not achieved well in humanities, particularly history, in recent years. There are clear signs, however, that achievement is now rising in this area.
- Work in students’ books indicates that students are making good progress over time in the majority of subjects. Students are aware of their target grades and they receive regular information about their current achievement, which is linked to GCSE predictions. Students indicate that this link to potential GCSE outcomes provides them with the motivation to do their best, as they can see how the standard of their current work relates to Year 11 outcomes.
- The academy has refined its approach to the spending of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students. Through a range of activities and extra provision, particularly the appointment of two specialists to deliver high quality literacy and numeracy teaching, the academy is providing highly effective support for these students. The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students nationally have closed rapidly, so that these students are now making good progress. These students now leave in Year 11 less than a grade behind in English and less than half a grade behind in mathematics compared to their peers nationally and within the academy.
- The leadership of the special educational needs department is of a very high quality. Students with disabilities and special educational needs are regularly observed in lessons to ensure that their individual needs are thoroughly understood. Each teacher has a ‘learning log’ for each of these students, which enables them to effectively tailor their teaching to ensure these students achieve well. Inspectors agree that these logs are having a positive impact and these students are making good, and often outstanding, progress.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported on their entry to the academy. They receive a one week intensive induction in the student support unit to enable them to prepare for integration into mainstream lessons. They are then supported well during lessons, as well as receiving extra, personalised tuition, outside of lessons. The impact of this high quality support is that these students are achieving well at the academy.
- Some students with complex social, emotional and educational needs are educated at other educational establishments. The academy has strengthened its links to these establishments and works closely with them and the students to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. Staff discuss each of these students, along with educational experts, to analyse their progress and to ensure that the work provided is enabling them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The academy is ensuring that developing the standard of students’ literacy skills is a high priority. Through effective deployment of the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding, students entering the academy with low levels of literacy receive high quality support which is tailored to their individual needs. Regular baseline and ongoing assessments of students’ reading ages show that students make rapid progress as a result of this support.
- There is a whole-school focus on reading. Students of all ages indicate they read regularly for enjoyment. The academy has implemented many effective strategies to promote students’ reading, including ‘drop everything and read’ where teaching stops for a time and everyone, including staff, read.
- The most able students at the academy make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics. In mathematics, students do not take their GCSE examinations at times other than at the end of year 11. They do, though, study mathematics beyond the standard of GCSE level in Year 11. Students commented that they enjoy this high level of challenge and inspectors observed these students making outstanding progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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	137203
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	451153

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	728
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Dyer
Principal	Chris Hunt
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 January 2013
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