

Coombeshead Academy

Coombeshead Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 1PT

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The academy has improved rapidly since the last inspection. This is due to the excellent leadership of the executive headteacher and the governing body, as well as other senior leaders.
- Students achieve well in all subjects. Attainment in GCSE is above the national average and is rising.
- All groups of students make good progress. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and that of others are relatively small, and are closing.
- Teaching is good throughout the academy. Teachers use their good knowledge of their subjects to help students make good progress.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the academy. In a growing number of subjects their enthusiasm for learning is a notable feature.
- Students and their parents say that bullying is very rare and that any which occurs is dealt with effectively.
- Students have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe on-line and in other potentially risky situations.
- Teaching has improved markedly due to rigorous management of staff performance and through the provision of highly effective training programmes.
- The curriculum is of high quality. It prepares students very well for the next stage of their lives and ensures that they have a good understanding of British values.
- Senior leaders and governors have an ambitious long-term strategic plan for the academy's future. The first phases have been completed successfully, and are contributing to students' improving achievement.
- The sixth form is well led and, as with other areas of the academy's work, is improving rapidly. Attainment, currently broadly in line with national averages, is rising.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Whilst all students make good progress in all subjects, the proportion who do even better than this is not high enough.
- Occasionally activities are not available for students who complete work quickly.
- Students are sometimes too slow when responding to teachers' requests, such as to start a new task or to improve work following marking or discussion.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 42 lessons. About half of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised the written and other work of groups of students, notably in English, mathematics, science and art, in order to determine their progress over a period of time.
- Inspectors reviewed documents, including those about students' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding. They also analysed data concerning the attainment and progress of current students, supplied by the academy.
- One of the alternative providers used by the academy was visited by an inspector, who spoke to students and staff there.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and with three groups of students. A telephone conversation was held with an external consultant employed by the academy.
- The views of 69 parents and carers who submitted them on the Ofsted online Parent View survey were analysed and taken into account. The views of 54 staff who completed a questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Baker	Additional Inspector
Mark Warren	Additional Inspector
Barry Wratten	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is part of The Templer Academy Schools Trust. Three other nearby schools are members of the trust. These are a secondary school, Teign School, and two primary schools, Christow Primary School and Rydon Primary School. The sixth form runs courses in collaboration with Teign School.
- The academy is of average size when compared with secondary schools nationally.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is above average. Most of these students have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties, although some have more profound needs.
- The proportion of students entitled to the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is allocated for students who are looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The academy uses two alternative providers for specialised vocational courses. These are South Devon College and TQ12. A further provision, Chances, supports students experiencing educational difficulties.
- The executive headteacher is also headteacher of Christow Community Primary School and executive headteacher of Teign School; he provides consultancy support to the other primary school in the trust. The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of students making the best possible rates of progress by:
 - ensuring that all students always respond quickly to teachers' instructions, both in lessons and in response to marking and feedback
 - enabling students' enthusiasm for learning, already evident in some subjects, to be extended to those where it is less apparent
 - making sure that new tasks are available to challenge students who complete work quickly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher displays outstanding leadership in building on the improvements identified at the previous inspection in 2013. Since then the quality of teaching and students' achievement have continued to get better and better. The executive headteacher has been ably supported by other senior leaders and the governing body in their shared purpose and drive for improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors promote an ambitious vision for the academy; to be a centre of learning excellence at the heart of the community. Much has been achieved already, for example improvements to the sixth form offer and the quality of teaching have led to an increased number of students recruited to the different courses available.
- The analysis of strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Very effective use of data concerning the progress of students contributes well to this detailed analysis. Effective action has been taken to rectify shortcomings, for example to improve students' achievement in mathematics.
- Middle leadership has improved since the previous inspection and is now a strength. The leadership of individual subjects is of consistently good quality. Other aspects of the academy's work are also very well led including the sixth form and provision for students who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Additional funding is used well to ensure that disadvantaged students achieve as well as others. In particular, a shortfall in the attainment of this group in mathematics among Year 11 in 2014 has been rectified within the current Year 11. This reflects the academy's strong commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Teaching quality has improved due to rigorous management of teachers' performance. Further training has been used well to rectify any shortcomings.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all groups of students. For example, recent changes in the science courses offered in Years 9 to 11 are leading to rising standards in the subject, especially among the most able students.
- Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They become competent readers and use mathematics effectively. They understand values such as fairness and tolerance and gain good levels of knowledge about the democratic process through participation in a Year 10 assembly to launch a mock general election.
- Levels of bullying, including forms such as racism and homophobia, have been low for several years. This demonstrates the success of academy leaders in promoting good relationships and tackling discrimination.
- Leadership and membership of the academy trust have enabled the skills of staff in four schools to be used to the benefit of all students. Senior leaders and governors have played a leading part in bringing this about.
- Parents have a high degree of confidence in the academy. Nine out of 10 responding to the inspectors' survey would recommend it to others, and there were no aspects where parents expressed a significant level of concern.
- Students speak highly of the independent advice and guidance they receive for the next phase of their lives. They value, especially, opportunities to attend careers events and to visit universities.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are of high quality. All requirements are in place and are effective. Good links with external agencies are used well to minimise risks such as child sexual exploitation.
- The performance and safety of students who attend alternative provision are checked rigorously. Those responsible have a detailed knowledge of each student's progress, and liaise well with staff at each provision.
- A range of external consultants and providers of teacher training has been used well to contribute to improvement. The academy has effective links with the local authority, especially concerning matters such as attendance and child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective. Governors possess an excellent range of skills and experience which they use with generosity. They check the academy's performance with an unusually high degree of rigour, and challenge senior leaders, with success, to bring about improvement. They use their very good understanding of data to compare the academy's performance with other schools locally and nationally.
 - Governors have a good understanding of how teachers' performance is checked and of how underperformance is tackled. They know also how the results of these checks are linked to teachers'

pay and responsibilities.

- Governors have played a leading role in building the academy trust and have been successful in attracting capital funding. This has contributed strongly to the rapid improvements that have taken place, especially in the quality of the sixth form.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Lessons seen on inspection were never disrupted by poor behaviour and students showed an increasing enthusiasm for learning. This was observed most notably in French, catering and in performance subjects such as drama, dance and music.
- Outside lessons, relationships between students are good. They show care and concern for others, both fellow students and those in the wider community. The strong links with a school in Uganda promote students understanding of the impact of their charitable work beyond their own community effectively.
- Students from all backgrounds are proud of their academy. The site is free of litter and graffiti and there is no evidence of discarded chewing gum.
- Students are keen to reassure visitors that bullying very rarely occurs and that other students challenge any of which they become aware. The school's records confirm this.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in a few lessons, mainly in Years 7 and 8, students are sometimes slow to respond to teachers' instructions because they are chattering with each other.
- Students' behaviour and attendance at alternative provision are checked regularly and any rare concerns are dealt with promptly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. This is due to the high priority which school leaders give to this aspect of their work
- Students have an excellent understanding of the causes and effects of bullying. This is true especially of that which arises from the misuse of electronic media. They say they are confident that they know how to avoid risky situations.
- Attendance has improved steadily and is now above average. Staff have worked effectively to reduce persistent absence, which is now well below average.
- Staff are well trained in child protection and other aspects of safeguarding. Students feel there is an adult they could speak to about their concerns if necessary.
- Risk assessments for offsite activities are thorough. Alternative provision is also checked for risks, including assurance that staff there have received the required checks.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good in all subjects. As a result, students are making good progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to enthuse students and ensure that they are challenged. They know what examiners in their subject require and hence ensure that students are well prepared for public examinations.
- Teachers encourage students to read widely, for example through an interesting range of texts in GCSE English. They also ensure that students understand technical vocabulary, such as solute and solvent, in Year 7 science.
- Tasks set ensure that students have opportunities to write at length and in a wide range of styles. This was seen in history and science, for example.
- Increasingly, teachers ensure that students understand the application of mathematics to the subject. Examples were seen in product design where students were using scale drawings.
- Marking and verbal feedback are used consistently well to help students to improve their work. Students appreciate particularly the discussions they have with teachers. However, teachers do not always check that students have made improvements to their work where this has been requested.
- Teachers use information from tests and other assessments to plan work that meets the needs of all groups of students. This enables, for example, those who attract additional funding to make enhanced progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of the most able students and set them challenging work. Usually, if

these students complete the original task quickly, there is additional, even more challenging, work available. However, this is not always the case, so on a few occasions students mark time.

- Additional adults, including learning coaches, provide good support to students who need extra help to enable them to learn quickly.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In 2014, the attainment in GCSE of those who left Year 11 was above average, having been below average in previous years. This was the case in both English and mathematics. The proportion attaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or better, including those two subjects, was also above average.
- Students in 2014 also achieved particularly well in other subjects including English literature, drama, catering and French. Scrutiny of students' work and the school's checks on progress show that further improvements have been made in a range of subjects including physics, dance and geography.
- In 2014 the proportion of students, including those who are disadvantaged, making good progress in both English and mathematics was above average. However, the proportion making even better progress was relatively low. School leaders identified and tackled this issue and current students are on track to make improved progress this year, especially in mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students attained GCSE grades in English that were, on average, about half of one grade lower than other students, both within the academy and nationally. In mathematics, attainment was nearly one grade lower. The work of current Year 11 students shows that these gaps should largely be eliminated this year. Improvement in mathematics among this group has been especially strong.
- The most able students achieve well. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades at GCSE is increasing in a range of subjects. Improvement is most notable in science, partly due to the relatively recent introduction of physics, chemistry and biology as separate GCSE courses. The most able students say they find the work challenging and especially value the guidance which they receive from staff.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve especially well. Teachers receive good support from the department leader, and this enables them to plan appropriate work. Additional adults also contribute well to the good progress these students make in lessons.
- The academy has used early entry for GCSE English, mathematics and statistics. This has been done in a considered manner and has not limited students' achievement in these subjects. The policy is rightly kept under review in the light of changes to qualifications taking place nationally.
- Students achieve well in physical education, notably in swimming and team games. They enjoy sport and have a good understanding of the contribution of exercise to a healthy lifestyle.
- Achievement is also good in performing arts, where effective use is made of the impressive theatre.
- Participation in adventurous activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Ten Tors Challenge, also contributes to students' good achievement.
- Students achieve well at alternative provision. For example, most of those attending Chances acquire the resilience necessary to return to mainstream education.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The improvements identified as necessary at the previous inspection have taken place, due to improved leadership of the sixth form at all levels. Senior leaders and governors, rightly, have given a high priority to this aspect of the academy's work. This has led to rising numbers of students being recruited into Year 12 and retained in Year 13.
- In 2014, students on both A-level and vocational courses attained broadly average results from below average starting points. This represents good progress. The variation in achievement between subjects was relatively small. The achievement of different groups of students was also similar, although the small numbers involved mean such conclusions should be treated with caution.
- There is good evidence from students' work and the school's checks that progress in the sixth form is improving. For example, in both chemistry and biology at A and AS level, students' work was accurate and thorough, and it was clear that teachers' guidance had been taken on board by students.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently of good quality. Teachers plan to meet individual students' needs in the often small classes. School leaders have asked teachers to increase the degree of challenge for the most able students, and it is clear that this is now happening.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning and speak highly of the support they receive. They are particularly pleased with the quality of advice and guidance, with opportunities to visit universities and to

research the range of opportunities open to them.

- Sixth form students also make a strong and positive contribution to the life of the academy. Their positive attitudes to learning set a good example for younger students. Opportunities for sixth form students to contribute in this way are set to increase further when new sixth form facilities open shortly within the heart of the school.
- Students studying vocational courses at alternative provision make similarly good progress to those on academic courses. Leaders are effective in checking the quality of this provision and ensuring that all students, whether in the academy or at alternative provision, are safe.
- Students who have yet to achieve the national standard in English and mathematics study these subjects and are entered for appropriate qualifications. School leaders can provide evidence of success in these qualifications, but evidence of the progress of those yet to succeed is less clear.

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	137176
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	454219

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	954
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leon Winston
Headteacher	Matthew Shanks (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 July 2013
Telephone number	01626201800
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