

Westergate Community School

Lime Avenue, Westergate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 3UE

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are improving too slowly, although current students, including those in Year 11, are making better progress than in previous years.
- Weak teaching in some lessons means that students do not learn as well as they should and do not make fast enough progress. Too many lessons do not give students sufficient opportunities to learn independently and develop their resilience, especially those where teachers talk too much and the pace of learning is too slow.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) have previously fallen behind in English and mathematics. The gap between their performance and that of other students is narrowing now as current students are making better progress and catching up on past underachievement.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are also making better progress, although in previous years they have also not done as well as they could and some fell a long way behind their peers.
- Senior leaders and governors have been too slow to respond to falling standards in recent years so that too many students have left school without reaching their potential.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers at all levels are now focusing with much more determination on improving achievement. This is clearly having an impact on improving the progress students make in all year groups.
- Students' attitudes towards learning are a strength of the school. They are proud to attend Westergate and are full of praise for the extra support and help they receive. They feel very safe and well cared for within what they see as a secure, harmonious community.
- The improvements in examinations already gained by this year's Year 11 GCSE students show that they are now making much better progress than previous Year 11 groups. Lower attaining groups of students, such as disabled students and those who have special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, are catching up with their peers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 32 lessons including four jointly with senior staff. They also undertook short visits to classrooms, focusing on marking, assessment and feedback to students.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, students, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspection team looked at documentation including the school’s own records of self-evaluation, governors’ minutes and reports from the external audit of provision.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 55 parents who had responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors also took account of the views of 70 staff who returned inspection questionnaires.

Inspection team

Christine Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Richard Butler

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Matthews

Additional Inspector

David Smith

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westergate Community School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The intake is mainly White British with few students coming from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students eligible for support from pupil premium funding is below average. This is money provided to schools by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children, or are children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A small number of students are educated off site at local colleges.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- The school's leadership, management and governance structures are currently subject to review as the school moves towards sponsored academy status in the near future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - consistently promoting students' skills in thinking for themselves, learning independently and developing resilience so that they are keen to take responsibility for their own learning
 - ensuring work is closely matched to the different ability levels of students and includes a range of learning activities that allows every student to make the progress they should
 - planning lessons that will deliver learning at an appropriate pace and stimulate students' interest and engagement with the subjects they are studying.
- Raise achievement, particularly at Key Stage 4, so that standards are at least in line with national averages and students substantially increase the rate of their progress by summer 2014.
- Ensure leaders at all levels are more effective in improving teaching and driving up achievement by:
 - checking regularly that teaching is good enough to improve students' progress and urgently making improvements where needed, including the sharing of good practice
 - making sure that all teachers are rigorously following the school's agreed procedures for managing behaviour and for giving students appropriate feedback on their work
 - sharpening planning for improving the school, with a strong focus on raising standards
 - commissioning an external review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In recent years, standards attained by Year 11 students in GCSE examinations were low in comparison with the national averages and did not improve. Students did not make the progress they should have, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, in 2011 and 2012 only around half of the Year 11 students made the progress they should in mathematics and English.
- When students join the school in Year 7, many are working below the nationally expected standards for their age. In particular, students' literacy and reading levels are low.
- Staff are now working with greater determination to remedy this situation and current Year 11 students are reaching higher standards than in previous years. For example, many students have gained GCSE grades A* to C in mathematics and results in other subjects are higher than in previous years. However, students are still not achieving their full potential in all subjects.
- In the past, students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding gained around a grade lower in their GCSE examinations than other students. This situation has improved significantly this year as the school addresses past underachievement. This gap in achievement is closing and currently these students are less than a quarter of a GCSE grade behind.
- Similarly, outcomes for disabled students and those who have special educational needs are improving and are now much closer to that of their peers.
- Many students are entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. Students not gaining at least a C grade or their target grade continue to study mathematics. The school is successful in ensuring there is no 'glass ceiling' to achievement in mathematics through early entry. This policy has improved students' confidence in their own abilities.
- Outcomes in science are consistently higher than in other subjects. Almost a quarter of students study three separate science GCSEs and do well, especially in chemistry and biology. Other students taking a 'core science' course also do well in comparison with their other subjects.
- A small number of students are able to extend their choices of subjects by attending lessons at local colleges. This use of alternative provision is effective in enabling students to pursue their particular interests, especially those leading to a vocational qualification.
- Younger students who have problems reading are given extra help through structured programmes. This is having a considerable impact on improving their reading ages in a short period of time.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but there are elements of weaker teaching that prevent it from being good or better overall.
- In lessons that require improvement, teachers spend too long explaining and do not allow students enough time to do their individual work or work together. Consequently, students do not practise their skills and develop their understanding, which limits their learning. These lessons are often undemanding and the pace of learning is too slow.
- Teachers sometimes do not plan well enough to meet individual needs. In these lessons activities are often dull, not creative or engaging, and students are given too long to complete the tasks. As a result, students sometimes lose interest, drift off task and find chatting to their friends much more interesting than learning.
- In more effective lessons, students are eager to learn and work with their teachers. They are confident participants in the lessons and have excellent relationships with their teachers. These lessons have a clear focus on learning and teachers make good use of information on students' performance to plan activities appropriate to their individual needs.
- Learning is improving rapidly where teachers have high expectations and build on students' positive attitudes to their work. A variety of challenging tasks are set and students respond well

by contributing to their own and others' learning.

- Where teachers follow the school's guidelines for assessment and marking, students get good advice on how to improve their work. Some teachers do not follow these guidelines rigorously and students get an inconsistent quality of feedback on their work.
- Through the school's marking and assessment strategies teachers have sufficient information to track students' progress and swiftly address underachievement through regular checks on their attainment. Not all teachers use this information on a regular enough basis to plan future teaching and learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most students behave well in lessons and around the school. They treat others with appropriate respect and courtesy. Students say they feel safe and that adults will help them to overcome any difficulties they might experience. Students are confident that any rare instances of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff as there are good relationships between all members of the school community.
- Students are proud of their school and would recommend it to others. When asked, they could not think of anything they would like to see improved.
- Students display positive attitudes to learning although some are too reliant on adults to keep them working at the right pace. These students are content to let the teachers do the work for them and, as a result, do not develop the independent learning skills that are important for their future success.
- A small number of staff raised the issue of students' poor behaviour disrupting learning and the unsuccessful management of behaviour by some staff. However, inspectors found no evidence to support this and students indicated that their lessons were very rarely disturbed by others misbehaving.
- The school is making every effort to improve attendance, especially for those students who are frequently absent from school. Attendance is rising and is just below the national average.
- The school has a positive and supportive ethos and is effective in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good range of activities after school helps build their confidence and self-esteem. Students are keen participants in some unusual activities, such as helping local primary school pupils with their reading and writing. This benefits the students as they learn themselves while teaching others.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as they have not responded to falling standards and students making inadequate progress. Things are improving but there is not a secure trend in improving standards.
- Recent appointments of more effective teachers and leaders are helping to improve teaching, with more effective practice and leadership in English and mathematics leading to better outcomes. However, these improvements are new and are not yet sustained over time and in all subjects.
- The performance management of staff is now related more closely to students' results. Senior staff are more effective in challenging underperformance and improving teaching. However, the monitoring of teaching practice does not always focus sharply enough on the progress students make in lessons when judging how effective teachers are at guiding their improvement.
- The curriculum is currently being reviewed to improve achievement, particularly in the lower school. The combined classes taught in Years 7 and 8, where students are not necessarily taught by specialist teachers, are rightly being modified to give a stronger emphasis to specialist English teaching and to raise standards in English for younger students.
- Students are clear that the school is rigorous in promoting equal opportunities and creating an

environment where no form of discrimination is tolerated.

- The school development plan is a detailed document that covers a wide range of the school's work but it has too many priorities, preventing a clear focus on improving achievement.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support students who are eligible with a range of activities and interventions, for example providing additional mathematics learning programmes to be undertaken at home and a laptop for a student to help access this programme. The use of this funding is monitored closely and senior staff make sure that it best meets the needs of individual students.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governance of the school has improved since the previous inspection where it was found to be inadequate in holding the school to account for students' performance. Some governors have a realistic understanding of the issues faced by the school and what actions they should take but this is not consistent enough across the governing body. Governors follow appropriate procedures relating to safeguarding and financial management. They understand how the school uses pupil premium funding to support eligible students and are aware of the impact on students' achievement. Governors are supportive of the improvements in relating staff performance management to student outcomes although they are not challenging the school to use this more rigorously to raise standards. Data relating to students' achievement are regularly presented to governing body meetings, but this has not been challenged robustly and quickly enough to have a strong impact on raising achievement.

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	126072
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402377

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	700
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Myers
Headteacher	Mr Steven Nelmes
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
Telephone number	01243 546800
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