

Katharine Lady Berkeley's School

Kingswood Road, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8RB

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The achievement of the large majority of students is outstanding. For some of those with special educational needs or who have low attainment when they join the school in Year 7 it is good. For these students, achievement in mathematics is not as good as that in English.
- Much teaching in all subjects is at least good with a significant proportion that is outstanding. A small proportion of teaching requires improvement and inhibits the progress made by some groups of students. More needs to be done to develop skills in literacy and in numeracy for those students who need it.
- The care and support for individual students is a strong feature of the school.
- Students' behaviour is almost always exemplary and there is an extremely positive climate for learning where students want to succeed and achieve well.
- Students enjoy school, feel extremely safe there and know that any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students' understanding of social, moral and spiritual issues is good, but their understanding of a wide range of cultural issues is less secure.
- The senior leadership team and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas in most need of development. This has resulted in improvements in subjects where teaching has not been good enough.
- The school is fully aware that the achievement of some groups of students is not as good as it is for others. Senior leaders are developing a more strategic approach to improving the achievement of these groups of students.
- The achievement of sixth form students is outstanding as a result of outstanding teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of a small group of students with special educational needs and those with low prior attainment is not as good as that of the other students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, 13 jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They also observed individuals and small groups of students over a sequence of lessons. They looked at students' work and discussed their progress with them. One inspector observed an assembly and others visited tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held four meetings with different groups of students. They also used lunch and break times to talk to students around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with all members of the senior leadership team and with several middle leaders. These meetings included discussions about the analysis of data and documented information and records provided by the school, including records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and tracking students' progress. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair and held discussions with them and the headteacher about the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Inspectors took account of the responses of 149 parents to the on-line Parent View survey and of the 45 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

James Sage, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mary Massey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Venetia Mayman

Additional Inspector

Helen Prince

Additional Inspector

Trevor Woods

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Katharine Lady Berkeley's School is a larger than average secondary school that serves a wide geographical area.
- The proportions of students supported through school action, at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs are all much lower than average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The school has specialist languages status and continues to be very active in supporting a number of partner primary schools in teaching a range of languages. It employs a sports coordinator to undertake a wide range of sporting and fitness-related activities within the school and the wider community. It also maintains active international links.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The school converted to academy status in August 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of those students with special educational needs and those with low prior attainment so that they achieve exceptionally well in line with the very large majority of other students in the school by:
 - analysing the impact that the support provided makes on the progress of these students
 - ensuring that the teaching of these students is as good as the best in the school
 - extending the excellent practice of some teachers to other members of staff so that all students benefit from the same high quality of literacy teaching
 - giving a higher status to the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- Build on the good work in literacy to ensure that all teachers take every opportunity to develop students' skills in numeracy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall, students enter the school with attainment that is above average but there is a small proportion of low attaining students.
- The very large majority of students make at least the progress expected. Many make more than this and achieve exceptionally well. The attainment of many students is well above the national average overall, students are prepared well for the next stage in their education.
- The achievement of the small number of students with special educational needs, those for whom the school receives extra funding and those who enter the school with low prior attainment has improved to be good. However, these students do not achieve as well as others in the school. Their achievement is not as good in mathematics as it is in English, but is improving.
- The development of students' skills in literacy is outstanding in some lessons but not consistently well established across the school. Teachers often miss opportunities for the further development of students' skills in numeracy. The impact of this is greatest on the achievement of the groups identified above.

The overall achievement of sixth form students is outstanding but less strong in biology and chemistry. The school is fully aware of this and the actions taken are already leading to improvements in the progress that these students make in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspectors agreed with the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching.
- Teaching in all subjects is usually at least good, with some that is outstanding. In the good and better lessons, students work with interest and enthusiasm, contribute well, support each other and make at least good progress. Teachers skilfully use questioning to probe understanding and to develop key teaching points. This was demonstrated particularly well in a Year 11 physics lesson where a well-managed demonstration was used to stimulate a lively debate that was effective in developing students' scientific thinking and reasoning skills. In a music lesson with a low ability Year 8 group, the careful blend of teacher demonstration, individual practice and ensemble playing provided the students with an extremely enjoyable and uplifting experience. As one boy said: 'I love music lessons'. Similarly high quality teaching and learning were seen in a range of other subjects.
- The school's own evaluation is that some teaching in mathematics is not good enough. This has improved through the recruitment of new teachers and good subject leadership. One lesson taught by a newly qualified teacher, with a low ability Year 10 group, showed an impressive depth of understanding of the performance of every individual student so that the whole class made very strong progress.
- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement. In these lessons, teachers make less effective use of questioning and limited use of careful monitoring of students' progress. This inhibits the progress made by some students, especially those with lower prior attainment. There have been clear improvements in the quality of feedback to students and in the clarity of their understanding of the next steps in their learning, but this is not yet well established in a small number of lessons. Excellent practice that could be built upon was seen, for example, in art, English and geography lessons.
- The large majority of students are extremely articulate. However, in some lessons, opportunities are missed for students to develop and explain their thinking and reasoning and to enhance their oral skills further.
- Many lessons make the most of opportunities to develop students' social skills, through paired and small group work, and to extend their understanding of moral issues. These factors contribute well to the ethos of the school and to the positive climate for learning which was particularly strong in drama lessons, for example. These skills, together with spiritual

understanding, are also developed well through tutorial activities and assemblies. Students' understanding of wider cultural issues is not as well developed.

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very rarely less than good and often outstanding. There have been clear improvements in the teaching of biology and chemistry leading to better progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The attitudes to learning and behaviour of almost all students in lessons are exemplary. Students have good social skills and often collaborate well to enhance each other's learning. They respond extremely well when teaching is lively and engaging, and usually try their best even when it is not.
- The school is welcoming and as one student put it: 'It's like one massive family.' Students feel safe, are always considerate and contribute well to the very positive ethos of the school. They have, and apply, a well-developed moral code. Students have an excellent understanding of the various forms of bullying. Incidents of bullying are rare and students are confident that these are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The positive views of the students are supported by those of their parents and carers, and by staff.
- There is excellent involvement of students in a number of schemes to support and help others. Good examples such as 'talking in confidence' with specially trained sixth form students and the use of the anti-bullying 'B-team' of students mean that students feel confident that there is always someone they can talk to.
- Attendance overall is well above average. Students move around the school with purpose and are punctual so that lessons start briskly and promptly.
- The school works very hard to support each individual student, but has a 'zero tolerance' approach when other students' learning is significantly disrupted or where there are any concerns about safety. In this, it achieves an effective balance between supporting individuals and minimising the impact of any disruption on others. When students are excluded for fixed periods, the school works very hard with the young people and their parents and carers to resolve issues, often with notable success.
- Sixth form students take an extremely positive role in creating the school's climate and ethos. Many are involved in 'drop in' sessions in tutorial time to give one-to-one support to younger students who might need it.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the priorities for development. These are focused well on raising the achievement and personal development of students through improvements in teaching and the support provided, and the appropriateness and richness of the curriculum.
- The school's self-evaluation usually leads to clear actions that result in improvement. For example, there have been improvements in the quality of teaching in specific areas where this was not good enough. The school has accurately identified the lower achievement of some groups of students as a key priority. It is particularly strong in its support for individual students, but less so in a more strategic analysis of the most effective strategies to raise achievement. The status of the highly effective special educational needs coordinator is not high enough to ensure that maximum benefit is achieved.
- There are robust systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and tracking students' progress. Both are used to identify priorities for professional development at whole-school and subject level and for individual teachers. However, the interrelationship between these two systems is currently underdeveloped. There is a good correlation between the quality of teaching in the school and the proportion of teachers who have progressed to the upper pay spine.
- The curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form meets the needs and aspirations of

students well. The school has good relationships with other post-16 provision to ensure a smooth transition for those students where the school cannot provide what they need. The school also provides a very rich and varied range of additional sporting, music, drama and other activities, with excellent levels of participation.

- The school has a clear policy for the development of students' skills in literacy. However, the excellent practice that exists is not yet built on to embed this across the school. The school is at the early stages of developing a policy and good practice for numeracy.
- There is a well-planned and coordinated approach to the development of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding, although this is less secure in developing a deep understanding of wider cultural issues in the United Kingdom.
- A wide range of successful strategies is used to ensure the full involvement of parents and carers in the life of the school, as indicated by the responses in Parent View. The very large majority of parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school and involve themselves as much as possible. Attendance at reporting evenings and at events organised by the school is high. The school works exceptionally hard to reach those parents and carers less inclined to become involved, particularly in supporting students whose attendance, behaviour and/or achievement are not good enough.
- The school has a small proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium. The amount available will soon rise significantly. The school has clear plans to target this additional funding to raise the achievement of these students and to improve the attendance of the small number of currently causing concern. Some funds are also targeted at improving even further contact with the parents and carers of these students. Plans are also in place for more accurate monitoring of the impact on both attendance and achievement.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - provides good challenge in holding senior leaders to account, based on a secure understanding of the analysis of students' achievement and the quality of teaching
 - supports the school in self-evaluation and identifying priorities for improvement
 - ensures that all safeguarding and child protection requirements are fully met
 - ensures the efficient management and deployment of financial and other resources, including the use of the pupil premium.

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	137033
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	403688

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1490
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gillian Hayward
Headteacher	Andrew Harris
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2008
Telephone number	01453 842227
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