

# Maltings Academy

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135653
<b>Local Authority</b>	Not applicable
<b>Inspection number</b>	364394
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nada Trikic HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	927
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frank Butler
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Szynal
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Spinks Lane Witham CM8 1EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01376 512911
<b>Fax number</b>	01376 501076
<b>Email address</b>	jszynal@maltingsacademy.org

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	2–3 March 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	364394

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 38 lessons taught by 36 teachers, and held meetings with the executive Principal, representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. The lead inspector had a telephone discussion with the academy’s School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at documentation including improvement plans, the analysis and tracking of progress, records of classroom observation, attendance and exclusions data and monitoring information. Inspectors considered the outcomes and analysis of 152 student, 35 staff and 170 parental and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school’s work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively do senior and middle leaders take account of students’ progress over time when judging the quality of teaching?
- What steps are taken to improve the outcomes of high ability students?
- What is the impact of senior and middle leaders’ improvement planning, quality assurance activities and systems of accountability on reducing variation in standards between subjects?
- What equality targets are set to reduce the shortfall in the attainment of different groups, compared with the standards of similar students nationally? Is progress carefully monitored, evaluated and reported?

## Information about the school

Maltings Academy opened in September 2008 with the Greensward Academy and New Rickstones Academy as part of the Greensward Charitable Trust. Each academy is a member of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) but has its own ethos, headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body. In June 2010, an executive Principal was appointed by the AET for Maltings and New Rickstones Academies, who share joint sixth-form provision.

Maltings Academy is average in size for a secondary school, with numbers rising in the main school and sixth form. A very large majority of students are from White British backgrounds with a few students from a range of minority ethnic groups. The number of students who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students identified by the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The academy’s subject specialisms are sport and science. The academy has achieved the Ecoschools Bronze award and Healthy Schools status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

A new headteacher was appointed in June 2010. Maltings Academy is due to move into new buildings on the same site in September 2011. A formal sixth form consortium is planned from September 2011 for the Maltings and New Rickstones academies.

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Maltings is a satisfactory and improving school. It has significant strengths in its provision for students' personal development and well-being. Staff have been successful in creating a safe and vibrant learning environment where excellent relationships underpin students' positive attitudes to learning. As a result, attendance is high and the extent to which students feel safe is outstanding. The impact of the 'discipline with dignity' programme is seen in the dramatic reduction of exclusions, internal seclusions and persistent absentees. Students enjoy their school experiences and relish opportunities to participate in sporting, drama and charity events, and take responsibility as prefects or peer mentors. Their contribution to the community is outstanding. Curriculum themes and assemblies ensure that students learn to be curious about the world around them broadening their social and moral understanding of what is right and wrong.

Standards rose sharply in 2010 from a low base to reach broadly average levels. There was a significant increase, to 83%, in the proportion of students gaining five or more high-grade GCSE passes, which is well above average. This was supported by a wider range of courses to motivate the students. The proportion achieving higher grades including English and mathematics rose to 50%, close to the national average but below the school's target. These overall results disguise variation between subjects and groups of learners. Standards in mathematics are now broadly average but remain low in English. The proportion of girls gaining a grade C or above in English was significantly below average. Attainment in the specialist subjects of science and physical education are well above average.

Despite an overall improvement in standards, Year 11 students made significantly less progress in 2010 than expected, given their attainment on entry. In part, this can be explained by weaker provision and progress in Key Stage 3. The focus on gaining a GCSE grade C has meant that the proportion of top grades is less than expected. Coordination between the English and mathematics departments has been limited. Systems for target setting and progress tracking are well established and work well to identify students for targeted intervention. The use of interim targets for

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

students is helpful in the short term, but targets are not adjusted swiftly enough to raise aspirations. Parents and carers have the opportunity to attend target setting events but do not receive written reports of progress. The tracking and analysis of standards and progress for groups of learners is underdeveloped to support specific actions to tackle inequalities.

The headteacher has injected additional challenge through more robust target setting. Regular strategy meetings between English and mathematics subject leaders with senior leaders now have a sharp focus on progress tracking, and tailored intervention strategies help to keep students on track. Early entry GCSE results for current Year 11 students in both subjects are encouraging. Action has been taken to re-group based on an analysis of results to challenge students to gain the best possible grade.

Leaders have a broadly accurate view of strengths and weaknesses although judgements on some aspects are over-generous. Too little emphasis is placed on the link between the quality of teaching and students’ progress over time. Students’ learning and progress are satisfactory. Although there is much teaching and learning of good and even outstanding quality, the proportion is not yet high enough to accelerate rates of progress evenly across subjects. This is because assessment is not used sufficiently well to plan lessons or provide appropriate challenge across the ability range, or within lessons to check on students’ understanding. Although the priority this year is to promote independent learning, success in some lessons is hampered by weak learning and literacy skills.

Although further refinement is required to strengthen management processes linked to self-evaluation and improvement planning, the capacity to improve is good because of the strong track record in raising standards in Key Stages 3 and 4. This is strengthened by the excellent work in promoting cohesive and respectful relationships and higher expectations amongst students. Capacity is further boosted through partnership work, particularly in the sixth form and through access to training, expertise and support. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluation, and held accountable for their work.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards and improve rates of progress, particularly in mathematics and English through:
  - regular checks on standards and progress against explicit milestones for individuals and groups of learners
  - an increased proportion of A\*/A grades
  - effective use of end-of-key-stage targets to raise the expectations of students
  - detailed reporting of progress to parents and carers to support learning.
- Achieve consistency and improvement in teaching quality through:

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- greater emphasis on standards, learning and progress for groups of learners, in lesson observation
  - individual training for teachers linked to feedback on observations of their work
  - further training for teachers on the use of assessment information to accelerate progress
  - robust evaluation of teaching quality linked to the progress of different groups of learners over time.
- Increase the proportion of securely good or better teaching by ensuring that teachers:
    - plan lessons and tasks that take account of students' prior learning, assessment information and individual learning needs
    - use teaching methods that provide challenge for students of all abilities
    - check students' learning regularly during lessons so plans can be adjusted, as necessary
    - increase opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills
    - improve the learning skills required for students to pursue independent work.
  - Ensure that identified priorities for promoting equality of opportunity and tackling barriers to learning are explicit in improvement plans so that:
    - all members of the school community can contribute to agreed actions
    - progress can be checked, evaluated and reported.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Attainment on entry to the academy is broadly average although the academic profile varies across cohorts. Students who left in 2010 entered with standards just above average. There was a notable increase in the proportion of students making the expected levels of progress in English and mathematics from Key Stage 2 to 4, although too few high ability students gained the GCSE grades expected. The attainment gap with national standards is much wider for girls than boys in English and mathematics.

Evidence from students' work observed during the inspection indicates that students are making at least satisfactory progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good personal care and make similar progress to their peers, overall. Students display positive attitudes to learning and, when given the opportunity, participate enthusiastically in group tasks. When tasks are well planned to meet the range of students' abilities and learning needs they work with confidence and independence, and make good progress. Learning is particularly successful when

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

the language used for learning objectives and assessment is clear, so students know what is expected. This is not consistent. Students sometimes have to listen for too long, and have too few opportunities to contribute. At such times students lose concentration and do not make enough progress. When assessment is not used well enough to check on students' understanding, opportunities are missed to consolidate or extend learning.

Other key features of students' outcomes include the following.

- Students are proud of their school and keen to be involved in the local community. A good example is the work of Year 10 students who teach physical education in primary schools.
- The student council is actively involved in decision-making and meets regularly to discuss the curriculum and other initiatives. The learning forum provides helpful feedback to staff. Students are commended for raising £9,389 for seven charities last year.
- Students are developing many of the personal, social and work-based skills required as preparation for the future. Standards in English and mathematics are improving to give students a better chance of achieving future economic well-being.
- A high proportion of students take advantage of the extensive range of sporting activities to keep themselves healthy. Students have a good understanding of healthy eating options but time constraints at break and lunch do not provide ready access to healthy eating options.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

In class, most students make the progress that is expected of them because teaching, while inconsistent, is satisfactory overall. The assessment of students' attainment is systematic and accurate. However, this information is not used consistently well in class to ensure that students of all abilities are challenged to achieve their best. In the better lessons, high expectations and effective planning ensure a good range of activities is well-matched to students' needs. Regular assessment and effective questioning help to probe students' understanding in order to monitor progress. In less successful lessons, planning is less well developed so that not all are challenged. A focus on the development of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics is inconsistent. The extent to which homework is marked and returned varies between classes and subjects, though it is exemplary in some.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible and makes a good contribution to students' improving standards through the range of academic, vocational and practical courses. Daily opportunities to practise reading skills promote an interest in wider reading. The development of information and communication technology is embedded well across the school to boost skills, confidence and qualifications. The 'extended enterprise learning' programme provides good opportunities for students to develop their investigation and practical skills. Students welcome the opportunity to choose new subjects to study in Year 9 so that they can make informed choices about examination courses. Special events, which integrate learning in science and physical education, enthuse and motivate students, and enrich the curriculum.

Strengths in the quality of care are underpinned by a thorough knowledge of students' personal needs. Students identified at transition as being academically weak or vulnerable are taught in the Integrated Learning Group until they are able to cope with the demands of the mainstream curriculum. Over the last two years, all students have made the transition by the end of Year 8, with the vast majority joining the mainstream by the end of Year 7. A buddy system is also set up to allow students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, to work closely with positive role models. Students speak very positively about the pastoral support systems and the personal support provided by staff. Academic guidance and support are improving through mentoring and intervention approaches, although they are not fully integrated within lessons to accelerate progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## How effective are leadership and management?

Governors, leaders and staff share a strong passion and drive for promoting improvement and have been successful in raising standards. Strengths in leadership are evident in the highly effective procedures that ensure that safety and safeguarding are at the core of the school's work.

The headteacher has taken effective steps to strengthen aspects of leadership and management. The leadership and management of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school has rightly placed much emphasis on the development of teaching and learning, with some improvements evident. The lesson observation system is applied systematically and identifies many developmental issues. However, it is overgenerous, and does not give sufficient emphasis to learning and progress observed in lessons. The identification and sharing of best practice is developing well.

An effective interactive planning tool enables whole school improvements to be mapped against key performance indicators. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body plays a crucial role with senior leaders in reviewing and judging improvement. However, there is insufficient emphasis on tracking and evaluating the progress of groups of learners, and this is a weaker aspect of the school's work in promoting equality. Equality priorities are not explicitly included in improvement plans to ensure a systematic approach. In other respects, the school takes many positive and successful steps to promote harmonious relationships and eliminate discrimination. Leaders have a good understanding of the local context. A recent audit provides a thorough review of provision in order to promote community cohesion more widely. Implementation is at an early stage. Positive images displayed around the school to promote diversity, and trips abroad help to broaden students' horizons.

Formal partnership arrangements with the New Rickstones Academy are developing well to expand the range of courses in the sixth form.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Students make satisfactory progress from their below-average starting points on entry to the sixth form. In 2010, the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to E was broadly average. Outcomes for English at A2 level are above average, but the majority of subjects are in line with the average or below. Outcomes for AS subjects are generally below average. Some students start on courses which prove to be over challenging and either change them or leave. The majority of students, who complete Year 13, enter higher education.

Students are articulate and keen to help and promote the school. They make very good contributions to the community through the mentoring of younger students and charity fundraising. A strong sixth form council takes a lead in school life. There is some good teaching in the sixth form, but overall it is satisfactory. In good lessons, lively teaching and challenging assessment promote learning and progress. However, in less effective lessons, students are too passive or the pace is not sufficiently rapid. The curriculum does not provide an appropriate balance of traditional academic and vocational courses. Proposals to offer more choice and to cater for a wider range of students' needs are planned as part of formal consortium arrangements. There are many opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities. There are good examples of individual care and support for students. Students' progress is monitored increasingly effectively but there is no central coordination for the monitoring of teaching quality.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

The number of responses from parents and carers is broadly average for a secondary school. A very large majority reported very favourably on their children's experiences in school, and the extent to which the school keep them safe. A small minority indicated a concern about the way the school manages unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, inspectors were impressed with the friendliness and behaviour of students. The evidence pointed to a dramatic fall in incidences of poor behaviour

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and most of the students involved in discussions highlighted the big improvement in behaviour in lessons and around the school. A small minority of parents and carers report that the school does not help them to support their children's learning. A few commented that there is not enough feedback on progress. Inspectors noted that there are opportunities on target setting days to discuss progress, and evenings are set aside to support with options choices. Termly reports include grades and interim targets but without a written commentary to explain progress in detail or to offer suggestions to support improvement. A small minority do not agree that the school takes account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors noted that the school uses questionnaires to gather the views of parents and carers, and that support had declined for the parent council.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Maltings Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 927 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	24	117	69	11	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	42	25	121	71	5	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	19	117	69	17	10	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	19	118	69	16	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	16	124	73	12	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	15	102	61	35	21	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	12	112	67	31	18	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	11	122	73	11	7	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	17	123	73	15	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	17	101	60	26	15	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	11	107	64	26	16	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	18	120	71	10	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	24	113	67	13	8	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	36	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



4 March 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Maltings Academy, Witham, CM8 1EP**

We decided that Maltings is a satisfactory school. It is improving and has significant strengths. Staff know your needs well. You are pleased with the care and support you receive. You told us that you feel very safe in school and enjoy the many opportunities available through the curriculum and beyond. We were impressed with your behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. You make an outstanding contribution to the school and community. You are very willing to take on leadership roles, to help each other, and to raise funds for charity.

The sixth form is satisfactory and students who complete Year 13 make the progress expected. Results in Year 12 are weaker because the range of academic courses is not suited to all students. Plans are well advanced to extend the range of courses through consortium arrangements with New Rickstones Academy.

In the main school, academic standards are rising and the progress you are making is beginning to improve. However, this can vary across subjects and different groups of learners. The curriculum is good and boosts standards because there are a variety of courses that interest you. Teaching is variable with a mixture of good and satisfactory lessons. You make the most progress when lessons are carefully planned to meet your different abilities and learning needs. We could see that you enjoy opportunities to work in pairs and groups to share ideas. Sometimes you have to listen to the teacher for too long and the work set is not always challenging enough. At the end of the inspection, we identified some improvement points.

- To raise standards and improve rates of progress particularly in English and mathematics.
- For leaders to check on standards, learning and rates of progress when they observe lessons.
- To increase the proportion of securely good teaching through careful planning to meet your needs, and to develop your learning skills.
- To identify priorities for promoting equality of opportunity so that improvement plans can be put in place to track progress.

The school's leaders and staff are working hard to make improvements. I am sure that you will want to play your part by working hard to meet your challenging targets.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikić  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).