

# Thomas Keble School

Eastcombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 7DY

## Inspection dates

26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This is a very inclusive school where great attention is paid to the needs of every individual student. This, along with high expectations of staff, has enabled students to develop well, both academically and socially.
- The school leadership team, including governors, has put in place sharply focused plans which have led to a steady improvement in students' rates of progress.
- All students, including disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in their GCSE examinations.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects, know their students well and plan lessons carefully so that students make good progress.
- The behaviour of students is good. They have good attitudes to learning and conduct themselves impeccably when moving around the school.
- The school's work to keep students safe is good. Students are well aware of the different kinds of risk they face, including when using the internet. Students are responsible and caring towards one another.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few teachers do not always make sure that students follow up suggestions for how to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, six of them jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work and case studies of individuals, including the frequency and quality of marking and the progress students made.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 112 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent and 61 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a number of documents, including: the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, the school’s information on students’ current progress, and records relating to monitoring, behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

John Mallone, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tracey Briggs	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thomas Keble School is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school.
- It converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Thomas Keble School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- About one fifth of students are disabled or have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs. This is in line with national averages.
- A small minority of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those who are looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is less than half the national average.
- The students come from predominantly White British backgrounds. Very few students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few students who speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides part of the education for some of its students at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding and increase rates of progress by:
  - ensuring that students consistently follow up teachers' suggestions for how to improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have worked hard to build an inclusive school where every student is valued as an individual. Staff have high expectations. As a result students make good progress and those who begin to fall behind are quickly given extra support so that they can catch up.
- School leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and the areas it needs to develop. They have effectively implemented improvement plans in several areas. As a result, teaching has improved steadily and students, including those who are disadvantaged, have made progress more quickly, particularly in chemistry, drama and geography.
- Students are set targets based on their current level of achievement. Their progress is tracked and reviewed regularly. Extra support is given to those who need it. As a result, all students make good progress and achievement overall has steadily improved. Parents receive regular reports and are alerted to any concerns teachers may have.
- Middle leaders make a good contribution to the overall leadership of the school. Both subject and pastoral leaders regularly monitor the progress of students and arrange support for those who may be falling behind. As a consequence, progress of all students is consistently good.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Students choose from a wide range of subjects at GCSE, with increasing numbers opting for the English Baccalaureate subjects. The well-integrated citizenship programme contributes strongly to the school's preparation of students for life in modern Britain. Individual arrangements are made for the small number of students for whom a wholly academic education is inappropriate. These students follow a mixture of GCSE courses and vocational courses taught both at school and off site. The attendance, behaviour and progress of these students are very carefully monitored by the school and their qualification success rates are high.
- Many students take part in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities, including overseas visits. The school regularly stages musical and dramatic productions involving large numbers of students and staff as actors, musicians, and in back-stage roles.
- The school has an outstanding programme of careers guidance, which begins in Year 7 and has recently been awarded the Careers Mark. As a result of the programme's effectiveness, students make good course choices in Year 9 and all those who leave school either stay in education or move into employment or training. The school's strong links with local employers, universities and colleges help make the local annual careers fair a big attraction for students. There are high aspirations for disadvantaged students who are encouraged to think of themselves as potential university undergraduates.
- Transition arrangements from primary schools are good and Year 7 students report that they settle in quickly, enjoy school and feel safe. Students who join the school with below expected levels of achievement in English and mathematics are given extra help to catch up. Their progress is strong in English.
- The pupil premium funding has been well used to provide a variety of extra support which enables disadvantaged students to make better progress. As a result, the gap in achievement between disadvantaged students and others is decreasing.
- Parents, staff and students all feel a pride in the school and strongly endorse its work to educate and look after its students.
- The school works effectively to promote equality of opportunity and to encourage respect and tolerance for ways of life beyond the experience of most of its students. Strong international links and the charitable work that students undertake do much to foster a sense of respect for all. Discrimination of any kind is strongly discouraged. On the rare occasions it occurs, it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The school meets the current statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors undertake regular training which helps them carry out their roles effectively. They have a detailed knowledge of the school and are effective in challenging school leaders over everything from rates of students' progress to the way the budget is spent. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and how it has improved. They keep a close eye on how money is spent, especially with regard to the new building work currently near completion. They know how the pupil premium money has been used to increase rates of progress for disadvantaged students. Governors oversee the performance management of teachers, including the headteacher and are aware that those teachers who do not meet their targets will not receive pay rises. They are also keen to encourage outstanding performance by providing accelerated pay progression. Governors support the school strongly and are proud of its achievements.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students behave well in lessons. They bring the right equipment and are ready to learn. They co-operate well with one another when working in pairs or small groups and swiftly follow teachers' instructions. As a result, lessons run smoothly and students make good progress.
- Outside lessons, students' behaviour is impeccable. They move calmly around the building, showing courtesy and respect to others, moving carefully in parts of the building where congestion can occur.
- Students take a pride in their work, which is well presented. Wall displays are treated with respect and no graffiti was seen on inspection. There is very little dropping of litter.
- Students are well informed about the different kinds of bullying that can occur. Bullying is rare and students and parents report that it is well dealt with. The student anti-bullying ambassadors are a strength of the school. Alongside the conscientious and caring staff, they have been responsible for promoting a calm and respectful ethos throughout the school.
- The school's inclusive ethos and its policy of zero tolerance towards name-calling have ensured that racist and homophobic bullying are extremely rare.
- Attendance is in line with national averages. Students are punctual to lessons. Some students are late arriving at school, although this is largely due to the unreliability of bus services.
- Students who receive part of their education off site attend and behave well and are well looked after and kept safe while on other premises.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students, parents and staff all agree that students are kept safe at school. Students are well aware of the different kinds of danger they face, for example when conducting experiments in science or using ovens when cooking. There is a clear focus on how to stay safe while using the internet, particularly social media. The hard work of teachers and other staff has ensured that no smoking takes place on school premises.
- The work of student anti-bullying ambassadors has helped ensure that students feel safe anywhere on the school premises.
- Visitors to the site have their identities checked and all staff undergo a strict vetting procedure.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching has improved over time and is now consistently good or better.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and effort. As a result students have good attitudes to learning, take a pride in the presentation of their work and make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers have consistently strong subject knowledge and good relationships with students. They plan lessons carefully and use resources effectively. This leads to work which is at the right level and good rates of progress. Students make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through effective teaching. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, students used the interactive whiteboard to highlight words that were related in meaning from a vocabulary list drawn from a speech in *Romeo and Juliet*. This enabled them to have a better idea of how Shakespeare created a particular mood in the scene.
- Teachers use a wide variety of approaches to engage students and maintain their interest. For example, in a Year 7 phonics class, students were encouraged to make specific gestures when repeating key sounds they were learning. This helped them remember those sounds better and led to rapid consolidation of skills needed in reading.
- Teachers make good use of questioning, checking understanding and adjusting lessons appropriately. Some teachers observed use supplementary questions to explore how students know something to be true. This helps deepen their understanding and leads to more rapid progress.
- Teachers set appropriate homework regularly. They mark it carefully, giving clear recommendations about how to improve. Students do not always follow up suggestions promptly, and so miss the opportunity to make more rapid progress. Some teachers do not always ensure that students have fully understood and made use of the feedback given verbally on their work or written in their books.
- Teachers use the information they have about disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs to set work that is suitable for them. Teaching assistants provide valuable help

for these students.

- Information from primary schools is well used to provide support for Year 7 students who join the school below expected levels in English and mathematics. As a result, these students receive the extra help they need and most catch up by the end of the year.
- Teachers think carefully about their practice and take full advantage of the many opportunities for them to receive extra training. As a result, teaching has improved significantly in recent years and students' rates of progress have accelerated.
- Teaching of those who receive part of their education off site is good. Those students make good progress and gain valuable qualifications as a result.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with prior attainment that is in line with the national average. They make good progress and achieve GCSE grades which are consistently significantly above the national average. In 2014, 65% of students gained five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics in their GCSE examinations. Progress was especially strong in mathematics and achievement was particularly high in English literature, mathematics, history, religious education and physical education. No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Students currently in the school continue to make good progress. Reliable data seen on inspection indicate that results for 2015 are likely to be as good as those in recent years.
- The most able students achieve well. Their overall GCSE results are significantly better than the national average for similar students with 98% gaining five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. The proportions of those achieving the top A\*/A grades is also higher than the national average for most able students.
- The progress of those students who are disabled or have special educational needs is good. They also achieve better than their counterparts nationally.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others in the school.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is well used, so that those who join the school below expected levels in English and mathematics make good progress. They do particularly well in English.
- There is a gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their classmates, but this is reducing. In 2013, in their English GCSEs, disadvantaged students were on average over half a grade behind their classmates. In 2014 this gap was less than half a grade. In mathematics, the gap was over a grade in 2013 and remained so in 2014, but there is evidence that the gap is reducing strongly for those in the current Years 11 and 10.
- Compared with non-disadvantaged students nationally, the gap in English is very small at less than a third of a grade on average in 2012 and 2013. Although there is no national data available yet for 2014, it is likely that this gap has now disappeared altogether in English.
- In mathematics, the gap between disadvantaged students in the school and others nationally was just under a grade in 2013 and is likely to be similar in 2014. Rates of progress in English and mathematics are steadily increasing for disadvantaged students currently in the school, with those in Year 9 outperforming their classmates in both subjects.
- Students who receive part of their education at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College take courses in construction or hair and beauty. They make good progress and achieve qualifications which are useful in preparing them for employment or further education or training.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137059
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448615

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	679
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Ponting
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Maunder
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September – 1 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 770301
<b>Fax number</b>	01452 770093
<b>Email address</b>	admin@thomaskeble.gloucs.sch.uk



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