

# Futures Community College

Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 4UY

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Standards have declined further since the last inspection when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is well below average.
- Boys achieve far less well than girls. Students supported through pupil premium funding make less progress than their classmates.
- Teaching is inadequate because the work planned is not challenging enough for some students and too difficult for others.
- Behaviour is inadequate because the poor conduct of too many students is not dealt with appropriately. Attendance is too low and not all students feel safe.
- Students are ill-prepared for their future and too few of them continue on to further study, work or into training when they leave the school.
- The sixth form is inadequate because the range of subjects offered is too narrow.
- Several key leadership positions, including the heads of mathematics and science, are vacant. A permanent headteacher is not yet in post.
- Assessment systems are inadequate because leaders do not check how well students are learning. Leaders, including the recently appointed interim executive board of governors, do not evaluate the impact of new initiatives or improvement plans.

### The school has the following strengths

- The newly created interim executive board has begun to take decisive action over the school's leadership.
- Students' achieve well in some subjects, including geography, catering and drama because of good teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 39 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors undertook a work scrutiny that examined students' progress across several subjects in different year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, and spoke with a representative of the local authority who provides support for the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 44 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and of the parents who contacted the inspection team. They also took account of the school's own surveys of parents. They analysed 29 responses to an inspection questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's data on students' progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They reviewed the school's checks on how well it is doing and the school's improvement plans.

## Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector
Sue Cox	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- Futures Community College is smaller than most secondary schools.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. Students from any other white background form the largest other ethnic group.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Forty seven students in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 attend off-site alternative provision for part of their learning at a range of providers including Crown College, Prospects College, Futures College/Big Yin, St Luke's and Seabrook College.
- The school works in partnership with Prospects College to offer courses in the sixth form.
- At the time of the inspection, a temporary acting headteacher had been in post since November 2013.
- The executive headteacher from Westcliff High School for Girls is supporting the school.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards and enable all groups of students to make at least expected progress in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - teachers make effective use of assessment information and plan lessons that take account of what students know and can do, and what they need to improve
  - teaching in all subjects contributes to developing students' basic skills, particularly in writing
  - marking improves throughout the school to match the good practice which exists in some subjects.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of all leaders and the interim executive board by:
  - revising the systems for checking students' attainment and progress so they provide accurate information for use by students, teachers and leaders in planning for further improvement
  - evaluating the impact on achievement of all new initiatives and broadening the programmes of study in the sixth form
  - strengthening leadership in mathematics and science
  - ensuring teaching staff are suitably trained and reducing the number of cover and supply teachers used

- improving systems for checking behaviour so that all students feel safe in school
- ensuring that all staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently
- taking students' progress into account when evaluating the quality of teaching
- ensuring that the interim executive board monitors the school's effectiveness and holds leaders and managers to account for students' attainment and progress.

An external review of governance, including the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Students' progress in all year groups and in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is too slow. At the end of Key Stage 4, there is a marked difference between the performance of boys and girls, with boys attaining very few qualifications.
- Students join the school with knowledge and skills that are below the national average for their age. By the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is well below average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have declined further since the last inspection.
- In both English and mathematics, students' achievement is inadequate because too many students make slower progress than is expected. In 2013, students made slightly better progress in mathematics than they did in English, but current data from the school indicate that the reverse is now true.
- Students who are supported through the pupil premium make even less progress than their classmates. Additional funding spent on initiatives such as extra support for students who are struggling with their literacy and the development of after-school learning opportunities, has had little impact. In 2013, students in Year 11, supported through the pupil premium, were over half a grade behind other students in English and around half a grade behind in mathematics.
- Students are no longer entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve much less well than similar students nationally. More-able students also do less well, except in English and mathematics, where they reach standards broadly in line with those of similar students.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been used to fund a specific programme to support weaker readers. As a result, many of these students have improved their reading skills and over a quarter have made very good progress.
- Students join the sixth form with below-average starting points, but standards by the time they leave are too low, so achievement is inadequate. Few students are successful in gaining GCSEs, or equivalent qualifications, in English and mathematics. On GCE A Level and equivalent courses, students make below-average rates of progress. However, most students achieve at least pass grades on a limited number of vocational courses. Achievement on hair and beauty courses is good, as a result of teaching which is sometimes outstanding.
- Careers advice and guidance for students are not good enough. Too few students go on to further education, employment or training, or indeed remain at the school to follow courses beyond Year 11.
- In performing arts subjects, such as drama, students usually achieve well.
- Some students study off-site for part of their learning with other providers. Most of these students are successful in gaining qualifications from courses which include hairdressing, painting and decorating, and brick-laying. School leaders monitor these students' attendance and progress closely.

**The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- High staff turnover has had a negative impact on the quality of students' learning. Too many lessons are taught by non-specialist and temporary teachers.
- Typically, students make little progress because teachers have poor subject knowledge and do not have the skills needed to manage students' behaviour effectively. Students are given too long to complete tasks and too often they become bored and distracted. The quantity of work completed by students is often insufficient and of poor quality.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new marking policy, but the quality of marking varies far too much. Although good quality marking and feedback exists in geography, students do not receive consistently clear advice and guidance from their teachers about what they need to do to improve their work in most other subjects. As a result, students say that they do not know whether they are making progress.
- Teachers do not use information on students' attainment effectively to plan lessons that challenge all students to do as well as they can. Leaders have identified the weak literacy skills of many students but too few teachers, across all subjects, are effective in helping students to improve their communication skills, particularly in writing.
- Where teaching is good, relationships between teachers and students are positive. The most effective teachers have good subject knowledge and manage students' behaviour effectively.
- In some subjects, teaching supports students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 9 geography lesson, students proudly shared their work on flooding in Bangladesh. Students in a Year 10 catering lesson demonstrated the knowledge they had acquired through their lessons, worked exceptionally well together and enjoyed the opportunity to have their sweet treats judged by a panel of teachers.
- In the sixth form, students make particularly good progress in hair and beauty, and benefit from teachers' expert subject knowledge and guidance.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. A significant number of students who do not want to come to school, arrive late, have negative attitudes to learning and behave badly. In contrast, a minority of students are extremely keen to learn and have positive attitudes to their work.
- Not all teachers, particularly temporary teachers, are implementing the school's new behaviour policy. As a result, students' poor behaviour is not consistently, or effectively, tackled by staff. Students commented on the high number of students who leave their own lessons and disrupt learning in other classes.
- Students' behaviour around the school at break and lunchtimes is usually better than it is in lessons. Nevertheless, unacceptable homophobic and racist comments were overheard by inspectors during the inspection.
- In the sixth form, students' positive behaviour and attitudes indicate that those who stay on enjoy their courses and get on well with their teachers.

- While safeguarding requirements are met, the school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Staff are fully trained to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students when attending off-site provision.
- Students said that bullying exists and not all of them feel safe in school. Some students feel there is a member of staff they can turn to if they are having problems, but many do not feel they have this support. Name-calling incidents are frequent because students do not have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including that based on homophobia. Nevertheless, the school has good links with a range of agencies to support students with emotional, health or family problems.
- Attendance is well below the national average, although there have been small improvements recently. Rates of persistent absence are high but reducing.
- Leaders have introduced an area for students whose behaviour has caused them to be removed from lessons, called 'curriculum plus'. This has helped to reduce the high numbers of fixed-term exclusions, but leaders do not monitor the reasons why students have been referred.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- The school's capacity to improve is inadequate. Vacancies exist for key leaders, including a permanent headteacher and heads of mathematics and science. The school's current leaders have been unsuccessful in securing a stable teaching staff. As a result, the large number of non-specialist and temporary teachers is having a detrimental effect on students' achievement.
- Improvement plans are not precise enough. They do not provide milestones by which leaders can evaluate the effectiveness of the actions they have taken. New leadership appointments have been made, but these staff have either not yet joined the school, or have taken up their posts very recently.
- Data on students' achievement are collected but not analysed rigorously enough. Senior leaders do not check how much progress students are making, either individually or in different groups. Consequently, targeted support for students who are underachieving across a number of subjects is not provided. Subject leaders in geography and business studies use data well to monitor achievement in their departments.
- Despite its aim to do so, the school has not fully achieved equality of opportunity for all. For example, leaders have not ensured that additional funding is having a positive impact on the achievement of students supported through the pupil premium.
- The school's arrangements for managing the performance of staff were inadequate until very recently. New systems are now in place, but pay increases are not yet matched to the students' progress.
- In recent months, leaders have placed a strong focus on observing lessons. The findings from these lesson observations are now being analysed. School leaders have also begun reviews of data on pupils' progress and scrutiny of their work, to gauge the full impact of teaching over time.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

- Teachers have not benefited from high-quality training opportunities in the past. However, since the appointment of a new leader in January 2014, a training programme is now in place. Teachers who struggle to deliver good-quality teaching receive support from a coaching programme. Local authority consultants have worked with subject leaders to develop their understanding of the features of good and better teaching.
- New leadership of the school's provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs has improved the way that teaching assistants work and provided them with appropriate training. Teachers are now equipped with detailed information on the specific learning needs of these students and are beginning to use this in their planning.
- The range of subjects in the sixth form is too narrow because most subjects that students study in Key Stage 4 cannot be continued. Inspectors observed high levels of student interest in practical subjects such as catering. Younger students commented positively on school productions and the trips they have enjoyed. Some students have regular instrumental music tuition.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement because there are too many examples of anti-social behaviour in lessons when students find it difficult to get along well with each other and staff. However, inspectors noted high levels of respect demonstrated by students in assemblies which focused on equality and fairness.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The very recently appointed interim executive board, secured by the local authority, understands the range of problems that the school faces and has acted to tackle underperformance in leadership and to deal with the deficit budget.
  - The board has not yet put systems in place to secure improvements in students' achievement or behaviour. They have not evaluated the impact of new initiatives and improvement plans on students' achievement and behaviour.
  - Nevertheless, members of the interim executive board bring considerable experience to the school and several of them are leaders in successful local schools. The interim executive board is well briefed on recent developments in the quality of teaching and is focusing all efforts, appropriately, on recruiting suitably qualified staff to the school.



## 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>	132762
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	425146

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	722
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	John Grover
<b>Headteacher (Acting)</b>	Stuart Reynolds
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 415300
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