

Higham Lane School, A Business & Enterprise College

Shanklin Drive, Nuneaton, CV10 0BJ

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Students make good progress in many subjects across the school. The percentage of students who leave the school with five GCSEs including English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress as a result of additional support and tuition.
- Students make good progress in physical education, and have achieved national and regional recognition for their sporting efforts.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, and teachers know their students well.
- Students show exceptional attitudes to learning in lessons and are keen to achieve their best. There is a highly positive atmosphere in the school, and behaviour is outstanding.
- Students enjoy taking an active role in the school, for example through the 'junior leadership team'.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher, supported well by senior, subject and pastoral leaders, enables all staff to be involved in the continued improvements in teaching and achievement.
- The governors have a good awareness of the strengths of the school, and where it is improving. Their regular visits enthusiastically encourage leaders' work on teaching and students' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not yet enough teaching is outstanding, and the outstanding practice that does exist is not shared with staff sufficiently to enable all teachers to observe outstanding teaching within lessons.
- In a small number of lessons not all students learn as quickly as they could, as some tasks are not sufficiently challenging for them.
- Some students require further guidance and time on how to respond to their teachers' written comments on how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 61 lessons, including six that were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several other short visits to lessons.
- Discussions took place with senior leaders, governors, and staff in charge of subject areas and other aspects of school life.
- The views of students were taken into account, and students were spoken to informally and formally. A range of students' work was looked at.
- Inspectors looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance, and students' achievement.
- The views of 64 responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- The views of 135 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, in addition to the school's own analysis of parents' feedback.

Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector
Patrick O'Dwyer	Additional Inspector
Renee Robinson	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in January 2012. When its predecessor school, also of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- This is a larger-than-average secondary school, where most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding from the government to support certain groups such as pupils who are in local authority care or known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs and are supported by school action is above the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A very few students study for part of the week at either the Opportunities Centre in Nuneaton, or the Coventry Building Workshop.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding so that all students make rapid progress in their learning in all year groups by:
 - planning learning activities so that each student has a clearly defined, challenging task and makes rapid gains in their learning
 - giving some students further guidance and time on how to respond to teachers' written comments so they can show they understand how to improve their work
 - sharing the features of the existing outstanding practice as a matter of routine.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with attainment that is above average, and make consistently good progress in their learning. Students left the school in 2012 having achieved levels of attainment that were significantly above the national average. Students in 2013 continued this trend.
- Students make especially good progress in their mathematical studies throughout the school. Progress in English is above the national average and improving strongly. This, combined with notably strong achievement in science, geography, physical education, business, German, health and social care, and design and technology, means that students are very well prepared for their next stages in education or work.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is consistently good throughout the school. They are supported by effective teaching assistants, both within classes and in small groups. Leaders carefully track how well individual students are doing, and students themselves commented that they valued the additional support as it helped them to apply what they had learnt to a wide variety of subjects.
- The very few students who learn away from the school for part of the week make good progress. Leaders monitor their academic progress, attitudes to learning and well-being carefully to ensure that the alternative provision continues to meet their needs.
- Some students have the opportunity to sit their mathematics exam early, if leaders assess that they are capable of achieving highly. These students and others also have the opportunity to study GCSE statistics as an additional mathematics-based GCSE, which maximises the chances of the most able pupils to gain two good mathematics-based GCSEs.
- The achievement of students supported by the pupil premium is also good. Their attainment in English and mathematics is rising to be near that of other groups, especially in mathematics where the gap is closing rapidly. On average their attainment was about a GCSE grade behind in English and mathematics in 2012, and this gap closed to half a grade in mathematics in 2013, and three-quarters of a grade in English.
- The additional 'catch-up' funding for Year 7 students is used to provide a summer school for identified students to have additional tuition for mathematics and English. This ensures that they make good gains in their learning in these subjects.
- Achievement in physical education (PE) is strong. Students are fully engaged in their learning, and have fun learning about keeping themselves healthy and performing to their highest level. This is reflected in the many national and regional achievements of various sporting groups in the school, including netball and football teams. This positive reinforcement of the importance of physical well-being is reinforced through other subjects, such as food technology where students enjoyed designing a healthy burger.
- Achievement in lessons is consistently good, and the students' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning make a very positive contribution to how well they learn in lessons. In a few lessons, however, some are capable of learning at a faster rate where learning activities do not fully challenge a few individuals.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, and occasionally outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of how well students can learn, so students typically make good progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, each student acquires new knowledge and skills quickly, with no time lost waiting for other students to complete work. For example, in a mathematics lesson, as soon as a student grasped the concept of improper fractions, they were set challenging tasks where they could instantly apply their new knowledge. In addition, students produce high-quality responses to teachers' written comments, for example rewriting paragraphs completed as homework. As yet, not enough teaching is routinely at this high level.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the strengths of their students, and what they need to improve. They question students closely in lessons to establish exactly how much they understand about their learning, and use the responses to adapt their lessons accordingly. For example, in a science lesson, students were given ample time to reflect on the differences between solutes and solvents.
- Teaching assistants engage with individual students and small groups to support and develop students' understanding of the key points of the lesson.
- Lessons are planned with good attention to detail, so students are clear where in the sequence of learning each activity fits in. Homework is set using a variety of approaches such as longer topic-based research and shorter tasks designed to consolidate the learning from the lesson. Students enjoy this variety, as reflected in the high quality of homework they produce.
- Just occasionally, a very few students would benefit from having more challenging learning tasks in lessons. For example, sometimes the teacher's expectations of how well an individual student can achieve in a lesson are not made explicit enough to the student, so they do not move on to more challenging work as quickly as they are capable of.
- Students' work is marked regularly and written comments offer a balance of encouragement and specific advice on where the student can improve their work. Students are sometimes given time to respond to these comments and reflect on them, but this is not yet a routine part of the lesson for all students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students demonstrate exceptional attitudes to their learning in a wide variety of subjects and situations. They show great respect to all staff, and have a thirst for knowledge and an eagerness to learn that create a highly positive atmosphere for learning. Students set themselves high expectations of engagement and participation in lessons, and do not tolerate any potential disruption to their learning.
- Students work very well together, both in small groups and independently. Of particular note is their ability to listen closely to their classmates' contributions in lessons and engage in discussions that quickly evaluate and analyse the key points of learning. They are inquisitive and readily ask questions of their teachers and of each other.
- They feel safe in school, and have a keen awareness of what might constitute bullying, including cyber bullying. They are insistent that it is very rare, and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

- Students take an active role in influencing their school environment and learning. For example, some Year 11 students are appointed onto the junior leadership team, and along with the head boy and head girl, they manage the team of prefects and their responsibilities. The junior leadership team and student voice representatives regularly speak to governors, and through discussion, offer their opinions and influence decisions. For example, they had a say in how achievement is communicated with parents through termly assessments sent home.
- Attendance is consistently high, as a result of the school's actions to reinforce the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Leaders have highly developed systems for analysing behaviour patterns, and by acting swiftly on the findings they maintain high standards of behaviour across the school.
- Students readily take on positions of responsibility, such as 'buddying' younger or new students to help them settle in. Their awareness of each other's needs and backgrounds, along with a strong desire to work hard and achieve highly, culminate in a highly positive climate for learning.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership of subjects and whole-school responsibilities is strong. The headteacher's incisive and inclusive approach to leadership means that every leader is aware of their responsibilities and embraces the opportunities to make an impact, as reflected in the students' good achievement over time.
- Leaders have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and where it is developing, and have detailed plans to ensure that it is constantly improving.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for students to achieve well. It is flexible in providing effective support for individuals, for example through accessing relevant courses on other sites, visits, after-school activities and opportunities for foreign travel, including to their partner schools in the Gambia and Germany. This results in students being highly engaged in all aspects of their learning.
- Leaders monitor the performance of teachers and the quality of teaching rigorously, and use the resulting information to identify areas for development and make sure the quality of teaching is good and improving. For example, teachers are encouraged to work in small groups to regularly discuss aspects of teaching, observe each other teach and to share good practice. However, the outstanding practice in the school is not shared with staff sufficiently to enable all teachers to observe outstanding teaching within lessons.
- Students receive good quality advice from independent sources regarding their next steps in education, training and employment. They move on to a variety of colleges and employers, and feel that the guidance they are given is valuable and takes into account their academic achievement and ambitions for their future.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a strong strategic lead. Governors are actively involved in the school, visiting regularly and routinely evaluating the areas and subjects they are linked to. They have a good understanding of students' achievement and the quality of teaching, and rigorously manage staff performance to ensure that good teachers are rewarded while making explicit the high standards they expect. Subject leaders comment on the supportive yet

challenging interactions between subject leaders and governors, making the point that the school is a great place to work. Governors evaluate where the pupil premium is spent for the most impact, and where the Year 7 catch-up premium is best allocated. They ensure financial stability, and that national safeguarding requirements are met.

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	137767
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	429481

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Whitelegg
Headteacher	Phil Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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