

Higham Lane School

Shanklin Drive, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 0BJ

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors provide inspirational leadership that is valued by staff, pupils and parents and carers.
- Senior leaders and governors are uncompromising in their ambition for the school and pupils' outcomes. They have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Their self-evaluation is thorough and accurate.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that supports pupils' academic and social development extremely well. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers have a deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and provide pupils with incisive feedback. Pupils value this feedback and use it well to improve their learning.
- Teachers have high expectations and make academic demands that challenge pupils. Consequently, pupils make substantial and sustained progress in their learning across subjects and in their personal development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils have a mature attitude to each other and to the staff. The school has a strong family atmosphere.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning have a positive impact on their progress. Pupils are confident, articulate learners.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Parents, staff and pupils agree that pupils are kept safe in school. Pupils are taught how to manage risks and keep themselves safe.
- The very rich range of additional opportunities promotes strong spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional development. This is a real strength of the school.
- Post-16 provision is well led. The head of sixth form has high expectations for students' outcomes. Students make good progress from their starting points. However, the amount of progress made is not consistent across all subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the impact of leadership, by ensuring that progress made in level 3 qualifications is above average in nearly all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and governors, inspired by the headteacher, share a powerful commitment to an ambitious vision for all aspects of the school's work. As a result, they have created a culture that enables pupils and staff to excel.
- Leaders and governors maintain a relentless focus on continuous improvement. They successfully use their understanding of the school's effectiveness and focus on the impact of their actions in key areas. For example, decisive action taken by leaders to strengthen the leadership of mathematics has resulted in significant improvements in pupils' progress.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is a clear strength. Senior leaders accurately evaluate and analyse teachers' performance. They act quickly to address any underperformance they identify. For example, highly effective staff training is valued by teachers and has resulted in better teaching across most of the school.
- Senior leaders and middle leaders thoroughly analyse assessment information to effectively identify where intervention is needed. As a result, pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are making substantial and sustained progress across all subjects and the majority of students in key stage 4 are making good progress.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, is used carefully and effectively. For example, the pupil premium funds a variety of strategies to help disadvantaged pupils overcome any barriers to learning they may face. As a result, there are no discernible differences in outcomes for different groups.
- The broad and balanced curriculum inspires pupils to learn. The range of subjects and courses on offer helps pupils acquire knowledge and skills in all aspects of their education and prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Leaders' focus on developing the curriculum is strongly rooted in meeting the needs of all pupils. Parents and pupils are fully consulted when changes are proposed.
- The fostering of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and within this, the promotion of British values, is a strength of the school. A range of activities both within and beyond the curriculum supports this development. For example, a recent assembly on the contribution the local Muslim community makes to local charities helped to raise awareness of different faiths and cultures. In tutor time, pupils have the opportunity to explore important issues in depth, including radicalisation and the impact of the Holocaust.
- Middle leaders form a dedicated and highly focused group of professionals. Collaborative work between subjects has resulted in a shared language among middle leaders. They consistently address issues, identify any underperformance, share good practice and disseminate that practice within their departments. This has contributed towards the substantial progress made by pupils across subjects.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is exceptional. A well-planned and effective transition programme on entry quickly identifies the additional support needed by targeted pupils. This information is effectively shared with staff. Support plans are regularly reviewed and evaluated, the

impact of interventions is assessed, and provision is amended accordingly. An extensive training programme for staff ensures that the needs of pupils are well met. As a result, SEND pupils are making sustained progress across all year groups and subjects.

- The school offers highly successful outreach work to local schools and in recognition of this work, a recent bid to become an Aspiring Teaching School has been successful.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed to the school. They have considerable experience and a range of appropriate expertise. This is used effectively to work collaboratively with senior leaders to set the strategic direction for the future.
- Governors work with leaders to focus on improving outcomes by gathering some first-hand information. They meet regularly with parents and pupils to seek their views about the school. For example, a link governor met with a group of pupils to find out if pupil premium spending was meeting their needs.
- Through committee meetings, governors challenge and support underperforming subjects and hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Governors pay close attention to their statutory duties, including safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective in both the school and in alternative provision.
- Safeguarding is well led and a strength of the school. The local authority education safeguarding service has recognised the school for its good practice and has adopted some of its resources in supporting safeguarding training in other schools.
- The large number of staff who have had designated safeguarding training, including non-teaching and pastoral staff, means that staff have both the time and the detailed knowledge about individual pupils' needs to be able to offer them bespoke support. Pupils value this support and say that they have a trusted adult to whom they can talk.
- The school's procedures are rigorous. There is appropriate filtering of the internet. The procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are understood and used well.
- Records relating to child protection are detailed, well organised and stored securely.
- Leaders work extremely well with external providers to support pupils who are at risk or who are subject to a multi-agency plan. Leaders are relentless in following up referrals made to children's social services.
- Members of staff are well trained in many aspects of safeguarding, including those related to female genital mutilation and children missing from education. They are regularly updated about the school's systems and aspects of safeguarding of which they need to be aware. Consequently, all staff understand that keeping pupils safe is their top priority and they refer any concern they have about a pupil, secure in the knowledge that leaders will deal with their concern quickly and appropriately.
- Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils are taught about e-safety, relationships

and sex education. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and staff and parents agree.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have exceptionally strong subject knowledge. They use questions highly effectively to ensure that pupils understand the subject content and to address and correct any misconceptions. This highly skilled questioning captures and sustains pupils' interest and demands that pupils think more deeply about their learning.
- Teachers plan lessons well as they have a secure knowledge about pupils' needs. Pupils are given time to reflect, embed their skills and secure their understanding.
- Teachers sharply and accurately identify pupils who are falling behind and ensure they catch up rapidly. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding, offer support and provide pupils with incisive feedback. Pupils value this feedback and use it well to improve their learning.
- Teachers are determined that pupils do well and they have high expectations for pupils' outcomes. Pupils respond well to this challenge. They love learning, are resilient to failure and thrive in lessons.
- Teaching and learning assistants are highly effective in the support they provide for pupils. They promote a 'can-do' attitude that effectively develops pupils' self-confidence and results in pupils being able to work independently.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are embedded across the curriculum. Displays around the school support the development of pupils' literacy skills. Tutor time is used effectively to support the development of pupils' skills in literacy and mathematics. As a result, pupils are confident, articulate learners.
- Teachers set challenging homework that consolidates learning and deepens pupils' understanding.
- Parents are provided with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing. The information provided clearly explains to parents how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given helpful advice on how to support their child by directing them to teachers' feedback in their child's books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The pastoral support provided by the school is a strength. Pupils, parents and staff overwhelmingly praise the help, support and guidance pupils receive when they need this.
- The school is proud of its inclusive ethos, where every pupil is valued and cared for. Leaders take decisive action to ensure that pupils' needs are met. For example, in response to an increase in the number of pupils needing support with their mental health, 15 members of staff have been trained as mental health first-aiders.

- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have every confidence that when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupil anti-bullying ambassadors provide additional support for pupils experiencing bullying. Logs are kept of reported incidents. Since the formation of the group, the number of reported incidents has increased. However, the number of incidents is still relatively small and the ambassadors see this increase as a result of pupils having greater confidence to come and talk rather than an increase in bullying.
- Pupils wear their school uniform with pride and look exceptionally smart. They are friendly, courteous and respectful of each other and adults. They are proud of their school and look after the environment. As a result, school buildings are free from litter and graffiti.
- Leaders monitor carefully the well-being of pupils who attend alternative provision. They track pupils' attendance and progress closely. Leaders keep in regular contact with these providers to ensure that pupils are safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school is a calm, orderly environment. Pupils' impeccable conduct reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils work with minimal supervision in small groups. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils worked independently in groups to successfully apply tactics in a game of rounders.
- Low-level disruption is exceptionally rare. The school is incisive in identifying and supporting pupils to improve their behaviour on the rare occasions that it is needed. Effective strategies, including the use of an inclusion room and restorative practice, have resulted in a year-on-year decrease in the number of pupils being referred to the inclusion room. Use of the room is rare and well monitored.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions, repeat fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions is low compared with the national average.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. As a result, rates of absence, including persistent absence, are low compared with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' outcomes have been above the national average for the past two years in a range of subjects. The proportion of pupils who achieved GCSEs at the higher grades in 2018 was above the national average.
- Leaders' analysis of recent assessment information suggests that pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are making sustained and substantial progress in all subjects. Evidence in books supports this.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND at least matches, or exceeds, the progress made by other pupils with the same starting points.
- The achievement of pupils at alternative provision is carefully monitored and analysed.

The curriculum has been appropriately adapted to prepare them well for their next steps in education. For the past two years, all pupils who left alternative provision went on to suitable post-16 placements. Leaders' information shows that all pupils this year have been offered places in education, employment or training.

- Pupils receive highly effective, impartial careers advice and guidance. There is an extensive and comprehensive careers programme for all year groups through the citizenship, personal, social, health and economic programme as well as 'drop-down' activities. The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities to talk to, and work alongside, employers. For example, Year 8 pupils have the opportunity to talk to local employers at an employers' carousel.
- Leaders carefully track pupils' destinations, and last year virtually all pupils secured an appropriate post-16 placement.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Post-16 provision is well led. The head of post-16 has high expectations and works tirelessly to support students' academic and personal progress. Students value this support.
- In 2018, those students whose starting points were above average made average progress. Leaders' decisive actions to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in a small number of subjects are making a difference. Assessment information for current students shows that they are making better progress, with the majority of students making good progress.
- The few students who did not attain GCSEs at grades 9–4 (previously A* to C) in either English or mathematics are supported effectively. All students this year have successfully achieved these qualifications.
- Teaching is well planned to meet the needs of individuals. Effective, targeted questioning helps students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of subject content. Teachers are ambitious for students to achieve their best. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment in the post-16 provision are of a high quality.
- The retention rate for students is high. The small number of students who leave the sixth form move on to placements that are more suitable to meet their needs. The decision to leave is not taken lightly and is carefully considered by leaders, the student and the parents before a final decision is made.
- Students benefit from a comprehensive careers education programme that includes visits to university open days. Work experience is being introduced for Year 12 this year. Students have the opportunity to take responsibility through representation on the student union and by leading enrichment activities. Fund-raising since 2016 has raised over £20,000 for local charities.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Attendance is good and students are highly motivated to achieve.
- The purpose-built provision provides students with high-quality facilities that include specialist science laboratories and an art room. Students use these well for independent study.

School details

Unique reference number	137767
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10058444

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,412
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	174
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Mr David Buckle
Headteacher	Mr Phil Kelly
Telephone number	0247 675 7000
Website	www.highamlaneschool.co.uk
Email address	contactus@highamlaneschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is a single academy trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- There are 10 pupils who attend alternative provision on a full-time or part-time basis. The alternative providers include North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, Positive about Young People, U-Neek Learning, Orion Training and Development, and Positive Impact for Young People.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke to the chair of governors on the telephone and an inspector spoke on the telephone to two of the school's alternative providers.
- Inspectors talked to many pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes, lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors observed learning in lessons; most of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Various documents were evaluated, including the school's action plan and self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding information and policies. Information about attendance, behaviour and safety was also analysed. Inspectors checked the school's website and the single central record, which contains information on safeguarding checks on staff and staff recruitment.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views by considering the 166 responses to Parent View, including 154 free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the 116 responses from staff and the 241 responses from pupils to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
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