

# Pool Hayes Arts and Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	104251
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	377049
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Robert Barbour HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<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>	1,212
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Dibble
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Castle Drive Willenhall West Midlands WV12 4QZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 368417
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 609501
<b>Email address</b>	postbox@poolhayesarts.com

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377049



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Barbour	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Hinton	Additional inspector
Mary Myatt	Additional inspector
Dorothy Bond	Additional inspector
Jan Bird	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers, of which two were joint observations with senior staff. Inspectors also made shorter visits to five other lessons. Meetings were held with four groups of students, and a small group of students was heard reading. Inspectors also held meetings with representatives of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at 451 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others completed by students and staff. They also looked at a range of documents including governing body minutes, school policies and behaviour records.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has specialist arts status. Most students are from White British backgrounds and about 7% from Asian, mainly Indian, backgrounds; a smaller proportion are from a range of other backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported with a statement or at school action plus is below average while the proportion supported at school action is above average. The area served by the school has higher-than-average social deprivation and a much smaller proportion of adults who have accessed higher education than average.

The school exceeds the current floor standard. It maintains a wide range of local links with the local community through the Pool Hayes Community Association and has gained a number of awards including the silver International School Award, National Healthy Schools Status, the Artsmark and the Sport England Activemark.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

### Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Since the last inspection the attainment of students has improved considerably and there have been improvements in behaviour and attendance. The progress that students make during their time at the school is currently in line with the national average.
- Students' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good, with the school's specialist arts status making a strong contribution. Students participate widely in school sport and this gives them important social skills. Students behave well around the school, but can become restless if teaching does not engage their interest.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is some outstanding teaching where students are inspired to learn and take on active responsibility for their learning. In some lessons, however, there is a lack of variety of activity, the teacher talks for too long and the opportunities for class discussion are limited. Sometimes teachers do not express the lesson objectives clearly enough.
- The progress that students make is tracked well in general, but the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is not tracked with sufficient rigour. The curriculum for these students is adapted to meet their needs, but these adaptations are not evaluated closely enough.
- The sixth form is satisfactory and students again make progress that is in line with national averages. Some teaching is of high quality, but sometimes students are not challenged enough.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Monitor the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs more effectively and evaluate their curriculum provision more rigorously.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - students have more opportunities for independent learning and for participation in their learning
  - lesson objectives and success criteria are explained in a way that enables students to understand the progress that is expected of them in the context of their learning
  - teachers use more open questions and provide opportunities for sustained thinking and class discussion.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Over the past four years, the proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, or equivalent, including English and mathematics, has increased from 19% to 49%. Analysis of the attainment of students currently in the school shows that this improvement has continued into the current academic year, so that students' attainment and progress are now broadly average. The proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at A\* to C, or equivalent, in any subject has also risen and is now above the national average.

Disabled students and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Some of these students are withdrawn from some lessons for extra literacy support in Years 7 to 9, but the school has not sufficiently evaluated the effectiveness of this provision balanced against the reduced curriculum for these students. In Years 10 and 11 many of these students attend courses at college and are supported by a dedicated teaching assistant. This is successful in that only a very small proportion of students are not in education, employment or training when they leave school, but their progress varies and is not tracked carefully enough.

There is no material difference in the progress made by students of different ethnic backgrounds. The most-able students are inhibited in their progress by the closed nature of some tasks, but there is evidence that these students are now making progress closer to that of their peers in other schools.

Students enjoy their learning and most particularly those subjects and lessons where they take an active part. In some lessons, students take on responsibilities, such as in very well-constructed investigation work in a Year 7 science lesson, and they especially appreciate the responsibilities they take on in physical education lessons. Students in the sixth form have gained valuable leadership skills on a residential visit

to Wales. Year 11 students described the gains they had made in performing skills through the visit of a theatre company which taught them stage fighting. A student expressed pride in a piece of acting which had focused on an imaginary conversation between a daughter and a father killed in a terrorist incident.

However, in some lessons students are expected to be largely passive learners, listening to the teacher for long periods of time and writing responses. This reduces their enjoyment of learning and the progress that they make. In lessons where the objective is expressed in a very abstract way, students are not clear whether they are making progress or how to improve their work.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly believe that their children are making good progress, while inspectors judge their progress as satisfactory.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory in the main school and the sixth form, although in both there are examples of good and outstanding teaching. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have a good understanding of how students learn, and, indeed, plan for a rich mix of learning styles. This is sometimes done in imaginative ways, such as in a Year 11 music lesson where sign language was used in learning about Hindustani Classical Music. In these lessons, students develop their technical vocabulary well. In an outstanding Year 7 physical education lesson, the teacher engaged the students actively in a swimming activity both as participants and as peer coaches. The use of varied activities and breaking tasks down into small steps contributed to rapid and effective learning.

Some teachers, however, do not develop students' learning in this way. This is particularly evident when questioning is almost entirely closed, and where the teacher demands too little of the students beyond receiving information. This was apparent, for example, in a sixth form lesson, where expectations should have been far higher. Some teachers try to foster discussion, but end up dominating the discussion because they do not let students work in groups. Some teachers present the learning objectives and success criteria for lessons in very technical ways. As a result students are not clear about what they need to do next and what would make their work better.

The most effective lessons help students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Here, discussion and activity lead to an appreciation of social issues and personal responsibility. This experience is supplemented by visits, for example, to synagogues and temples, and this also illustrates the positive impact that the broad curriculum has on students' learning.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly say that their children are well taught. Inspectors found this to be true in some subjects, but that overall the quality of teaching is only satisfactory.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students behave well around the school. A system for positive discipline has made a major impact on behaviour and it is in most cases applied consistently by teachers. Students were articulate in describing the improvement in behaviour, but a quarter of parents and carers and a fifth of students responded to the questionnaire by saying that there is some disruption in lessons from time to time. Inspectors' observations and analysis of behaviour records indicate that such disruption is uncommon, but that when too little is demanded of students, their attention does wander and there is low-level fidgeting or off-task chatter. By contrast, when teaching is good and when students are inspired by the subject matter and given responsibility, they respond very well and support each other's learning actively.

Parents and carers strongly expressed the view that their children are safe in school. Students indicate that they feel safe and that bullying is rare, and they express a clear view that it is dealt with well. Inspectors noted that incidents are recorded carefully and are low in number. Students understand well how to keep themselves safe online. Attendance is broadly average and has shown improvement over the past few years. The use of fixed-term exclusions has fallen sharply over a three-year period, but against this trend the number of students excluded who are disabled or who have special educational needs has risen a little.

## Leadership and management

Since the last inspection there have been substantial improvements in students' attainment, in the quality of teaching and in the behaviour of students. This illustrates that the school has good capacity for further improvement. School leaders monitor the quality of teaching and have established coaching and mentoring programmes to enable teachers to improve their practice. While this has yielded improvement, there are still wide variations in the quality of teaching.

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, not least that inspired by the school's arts specialism. Students of both genders take an active part in the performing and creative arts and there is a breadth of activities and visits. Students from Year 11 described taking part in the Copenhagen Climate Change summit and making presentations to students in Danish schools. This had clearly made an impact on them. Other students described the opportunities they had received as part of the Aim Higher initiative, and their determination to be the first member of their family to go on to higher education.

These examples also illustrate how the curriculum helps students to prepare for their future in a modern, democratic Britain and the global society. The curriculum provides a broad range of pathways from 14 to 19. However, the pathways followed by disabled students and those with special educational needs have not been sufficiently evaluated to assess that they are meeting those students' needs as well as possible. Overall the curriculum is therefore no more than satisfactory.

The governing body maintains a general oversight of the school and seeks to challenge senior leaders through commissioning external advice. However, this advice has not enabled the governing body itself to gain deeper insights into the

needs of the school.

Senior leaders have been effective in ensuring the safe recruitment of staff, in supporting children who are in need or at risk and in the rigour with which they follow up absences. At the time of the inspection, however, the records detailing staff training in safeguarding were incomplete. School leaders have been effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Racist incidents are very rare indeed and as standards have risen, the gaps in achievement between different groups have been steadily closing.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



10 February 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Castle Drive,  
Willenhall WV12 4QZ**

Thank you for your welcome and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection, and to the many of you who filled in questionnaires. We have judged your school to be satisfactory.

Your school has many strengths. We were impressed by the way standards and behaviour have improved over the last few years and also by the wide range of activities you take part in. Many of you told us how much you enjoy practical subjects such as physical education and the arts. The school helps you to mature and develop and it is noticeable how many of you progress to further or higher education or employment when you leave school. However, some of your lessons are not currently stretching you enough, and the progress of those of you who are disabled or who have special educational needs to be monitored more closely.

We have asked the school to make sure that all your lessons are as good as the very best. In particular this means making sure that:

- you really understand the objectives for each lesson and what it would mean to be successful
- you have opportunities in more lessons to work independently and take responsibility for your learning
- more lessons contain varied and interesting activities that make you think and develop your understanding.

Your headteacher and his senior team are working hard to further improve the school. You can play your part by working hard and continuing to play a full part in the life of the school.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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