

Studley High School – A Humanities and Music College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136786
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	384812
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	748
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Large
Headteacher	Elaine Young
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
School address	Crooks Lane Studley B80 7QX
Telephone number	01527 852478
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 40 lessons taught by 38 different teachers and some of the lesson observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors spoke with staff, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, and groups of pupils. A discussion was also held with a small group of parents and carers. Inspectors looked at the analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, academy leaders' monitoring records, academy development planning and risk assessments. Inspectors also analysed the questionnaires received from a sample of 81 pupils, 50 staff and 429 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How consistent is the quality of good and better teaching across all subjects and what is the impact of this on pupils' achievement?
- What contribution does the curricular provision make to pupils' outcomes?
- How effective is the quality of leadership and management at all levels in tackling underperformance and in sustaining improvement over time?

Information about the school

This academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It converted to academy status in June 2011. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average, and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The academy's specialist subjects are humanities (English and drama) and music. The academy achieved the enhanced Healthy Schools status in June 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding academy. Excellent leadership and management at all levels, including from members of the governing body, have built very successfully on the strengths identified in the last inspection report. Consequently, pupils' achievement is outstanding. The year-on-year improvement in its performance demonstrates the academy's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The proportion of pupils who attain five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is consistently significantly above the national average. The academy's motto 'always aiming higher' is very well demonstrated in its track record of sustaining a high attendance rate, the very significant improvement in the quality of teaching, and in the accurate self-evaluation of the academy's effectiveness.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is evident, for instance, in the ethos generated by leadership, in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' behaviour. Pupils feel exceptionally safe because the academy provides them with outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. Parents and carers are extremely appreciative of this, typically commenting, 'My child has had a very enjoyable time at Studley. The staff have been supportive, caring and very encouraging. I know that as her time at Studley comes to an end she will be very sad to leave.'

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, including in lessons where previously there had been an unacceptable amount of low-level disruption. This has been eradicated so that pupils learn very productively in a safe environment. This is a significant factor in pupils' highly successful learning. The rate of exclusions is low and attendance is consistently high. Pupils have mature attitudes and treat each other and staff with respect. Pupils from a wide range of groups have a strong voice in decisions relating to their learning, well-being and the local environment. Pupils understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and the vast majority adopt sensible eating habits and participate in health promoting activities.

High levels of skills in English, mathematics and in information and communication technology (ICT) indicate that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education and future workplace. An outstanding curriculum has undergone many changes to make it suitable and relevant. It meets the needs of pupils very well, particularly those who may be potentially vulnerable. This ensures that, in addition to gaining GCSE passes in English and mathematics, these pupils also gain accreditation in more vocational subjects.

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Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils arrive punctually and settle to work promptly. Classrooms provide very well-maintained, stimulating environments with engaging displays, thus creating the right atmosphere for successful learning. Teachers bring the best out of the pupils by challenging and encouraging them. As a result, pupils' progress in learning is outstanding. Marking of work is effective but there is some variation in the quality of feedback to pupils and some inconsistency in ensuring that all pupils respond to advice for improvement.

Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher's inspirational leadership sets a clear direction, which is followed with determination. Staff morale is high and there is excellent teamwork. Outstanding partnerships with local schools and external agencies make a significant impact on pupils' education. Partnerships help provide additional expertise to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, thereby ensuring that all pupils have a chance to succeed. The academy's engagement with parents and carers is good. Parental views are sought through a wide range of means, including surveys and consultation meetings. Although account is taken of parental views, a small minority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed opinions that this is not always the case. Senior leaders and members of the governing body recognise that not enough is done to provide always timely communication indicating what the academy has done to take account of parental suggestions and concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the academy's engagement with parents and carers by increasing the frequency of communication with them so that there is an improvement in parental perceptions about how their concerns and suggestions are addressed.
- Eradicate the variability in assessment by ensuring that there is greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that they all know how to improve their work and they routinely demonstrate how they are responding to teachers' advice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

From broadly average starting points on entry to the academy, pupils' achievement is outstanding. Attainment is consistently high by the end of Year 11, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In 2011, pupils' rate of progress in English was above and, in mathematics, well above the national median. Although a smaller proportion of pupils take the academy's specialist subject of music at GCSE, results are above average. GCSE results in drama dipped in 2010 but have improved this year. Lessons observed in this subject show that pupils attain above average standards and now make at least good progress. For example, in a Year 7 lesson using role play about space travellers leaving Earth, pupils' skills in developing

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character and emotional understanding were promoted very well. This lesson was also an example of how pupils’ spiritual development is promoted very effectively in a number of subjects.

Leaders are very adept at tracking and monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils. Leaders correctly identified reasons for a gap in girls’ and boys’ attainment at GCSE in 2010, and remedial action led to a narrowing of the gap in 2011. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals attain GCSE standards, which are above the national average. Progress made by these pupils and those who have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to their peers in the academy because teachers are highly skilled in matching work to specific needs.

Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds develop as confident, articulate and tolerant young people as they move through the academy. They say that staff deal swiftly with the few instances of bullying, and pupils know who to talk to for support and help. Pupils welcome the recent introduction of mixed-age tutor groups. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community and take on responsibilities willingly and highly effectively, for example in the school council and acting as prefects and mentors. Participation in a wide range of academy activities, including many clubs, trips, events and projects enhances pupils’ enjoyment.

Pupils’ adoption of healthy lifestyles is outstanding and reflects the academy’s enhanced Healthy Schools status. Pupils readily embrace being part of a harmonious community. Instances of reported racist behaviour are rare and dealt with very effectively. Pupils learn about different cultures and lifestyles through a variety of subjects, activities and celebrations, often portraying learning in vivid displays. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school. They are prepared extremely well for transition both on joining the academy and moving on to their next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Among the consistent features of lessons are high expectations and excellent quality of relationships. These create a very positive climate for learning while developing pupils' confidence to try new things. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson on planning an investigation, pupils were challenged to think imaginatively and confidently using their prior knowledge constructively. Teaching also deploys high-quality subject knowledge successfully, often using probing questioning techniques to stretch pupils' thinking, thereby deepening their knowledge and understanding.

Highly successful learning is also evident in lessons that have sharp pace and extremely well-matched tasks and activities, including in ability-set classes. This shows that teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' current attainment and capability. They use this information very effectively so that pupils of all abilities, including those who have specific learning difficulties or gifts, progress equally well. Very good marking of pupils' work and the use of assessment in lessons, including self- and peer-assessment ensures that pupils have an accurate understanding of their progress. However, the quality of teachers' comments in marking is variable and teachers do not always follow up their advice for improvement with pupils.

The curriculum has been modified over recent years and is a key factor in ensuring pupils' excellent outcomes. Partnerships, for example with a local post-16 college, are used very effectively to enhance what the academy cannot provide by itself. This benefits particular pupils because they can combine academic and vocational options. Triple science subjects, the recent addition of Spanish to French and German, and an option for classical civilisation, extend learning opportunities. Most pupils participate in different extra-curricular activities, including music, reflecting the impact of the academy's specialism. In the academy's other specialist subjects of English and drama, pupils achieve very well.

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are safe and exceedingly well cared for due to the high commitment of all staff. The academy knows pupils very well and makes excellent connections with families, especially those who are potentially vulnerable. A highly dedicated and effective team provide timely support, using external support services when necessary. Consequently, barriers to learning are removed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior staff and governing body set a very clear direction for the academy. This is widely shared by staff, pupils and very many parents and carers, some of whom met with the lead inspector to voice their support for the academy. The commitment and morale of staff is high. Leaders drive improvement and embed ambition exceedingly well. The great majority of the senior leadership team members have remained in the academy over recent years, developing and thriving under the very strong leadership of the headteacher.

Leaders carry out their roles and responsibilities highly effectively. Line management is robust and skilfully informs accurate self-evaluation based on a thorough analysis of performance. Each curriculum area provides robust evaluations and these contribute to the setting of the right priorities for improvement. The impact is evident in pupils’ consistently high standards of attainment and excellent progress. The strong promotion of inclusion means that all pupils are integrated seamlessly into the life of the academy. All pupils, whatever their background or ability, make outstanding progress from their starting points. This demonstrates the academy’s success in achieving equality of opportunity.

The governing body knows the academy’s work very well though its members’ personal visits and attendance at a wide range of meetings, including subject meetings. All these help the governing body to provide a very good balance of support and challenge. The governing body has shown innovation in steering the school to its current academy status, as well as ensuring that astute financial management provides excellent value for money. Safeguarding procedures are very rigorous, thereby securing pupils’ safety. All aspects of safeguarding are thoroughly addressed to the point where it permeates all aspects of academy life. Staff from the academy go out to other local schools to lead training in safeguarding. There is a very strong commitment to promote community cohesion. The academy community itself is very harmonious and cohesive. Pupils have a very strong understanding of different faiths and cultures, helped by the academy’s link with an inner city school, which broadens horizons for pupils at both schools. Pupils also maintain very effective links with national and international schools and charities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	1
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driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

A high percentage of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority of those returning it and those who spoke with an inspector are very happy with the education provided for their children. Typical comments include, ‘The care provided for individual needs is outstanding; all the teachers are enthusiastic; children are well looked after by the staff.’

A very small minority of parents and carers believe that the academy does not inform them about their children’s progress, does not help them to support their children’s learning, and does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors considered these views, alongside the findings of the academy’s own survey in October 2011, which was conducted by an external organisation. Inspectors found that the academy has a wide range of methods whereby pupils’ progress is reported to parents and carers. Provision of booklets and workshops, for example, guide parents and carers as to how they can support their children’s learning. There are clear and accessible channels for parents and carers to communicate with the academy but inspectors agree the need to improve the timeliness of feedback to parents and carers about how their concerns are being addressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Studley High School - A Humanities and Music College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 429 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 758 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	149	35	248	58	24	6	6	1
The school keeps my child safe	140	33	274	64	11	3	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	110	26	254	59	53	12	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	109	25	264	62	43	10	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	104	24	277	65	29	7	5	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	73	17	268	62	66	15	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	15	296	69	52	12	4	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	82	19	260	61	38	9	10	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	98	23	270	63	38	9	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	100	23	268	62	34	8	17	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	63	15	254	59	52	12	13	3
The school is led and managed effectively	110	26	261	61	31	7	10	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	141	33	243	57	30	7	8	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.

18 November 2011

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Studley High School – A Humanities and Music College,
Studley B80 7QX**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited your academy. Thanks also to those of you who filled in a questionnaire. Your academy provides you with an outstanding education. By the end of Year 11, your achievement is consistently excellent from your average starting points on entry to the academy. The proportion of pupils attaining GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics is also consistently high compared with national averages. These very positive outcomes reflect the outstanding quality of teaching you experience. In the great majority of lessons we visited, you worked hard because you were very well challenged with tasks suited to your different abilities. We were impressed with the way you respect each other and your appreciation of cultural and religious diversity. You make an excellent contribution to the academy's life through, for example, the school council and in your roles as prefects and mentors. Congratulations to those of you who made the sculpture, which is so prominently displayed on the roundabout in Studley Village.

You told us that you feel very safe and that the few instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Your attendance rate is high and your punctuality is excellent. We agree with the senior leaders' view that your behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the academy. Very many of you adopt healthy lifestyles and participate in sporting activities. You benefit very well from an outstanding curriculum and a wide range of activities, trips and clubs. Your teachers and staff know you very well and they make sure that any particular needs that you have are met successfully.

The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The headteacher and staff set high expectations and have made significant improvements over recent years to make the overall effectiveness of the academy outstanding. A small minority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their suggestions and concerns are not taken into account. We have asked senior leaders to improve this aspect of the academy's work to engage parents and carers. We saw many very helpful comments on your work to show you how to improve. However, this is not always the case and we have asked teachers to be consistent in helping you through their comments. You can all help by following their advice.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely
Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

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