

# The Hundred of Hoo Academy

Main Road, Rochester, Kent, ME3 9HH

**Inspection dates** 12–13 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress from their very low starting points. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make equally good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teaching has improved since the academy opened and most teachers plan their lessons well to make sure that students achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and provide them with very helpful comments on how to achieve the next level of attainment.
- Students behave well and feel safe in the academy. Students' attendance is in line with the national average.
- Leaders, managers and governors have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further. This is an academy that continues to improve.
- The subjects and qualifications available to students in all three key stages have been chosen thoughtfully in order to ensure that every student can be well prepared for the next stage in their school career.
- The skilled and committed governing body actively challenges leaders when necessary.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and make a positive contribution to the life of the academy.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching still requires improvement and students do not always respond to what teachers ask them to do when they mark their work.
- Students are sometimes too dependent on their teachers and there are not always enough challenging activities for the most able students.
- Not all teachers match the work well enough to the needs of individual students.
- Although improving, students' achievement is better in some subjects than in others.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 41 lessons. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors to some of these lessons. In addition, the lead inspector visited a number of lessons to look at students' work and another inspector called in to a few lessons to observe disabled students and those with special educational needs at work.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, heads of subjects, heads of year, different groups of students, members of The Williamson Trust, the governing body, and one parent or carer.
- Inspectors looked at some of the academy's documentation, including improvement plans, self-evaluation documents, performance data and records on behaviour and attendance. They also examined the academy's central record of the recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered 114 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The lead inspector received four letters from parents and carers. Inspectors also took account of the views of staff, including those expressed in 72 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

John Daniell, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Valerie Fehners	Additional inspector
Joanna Jones	Additional inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional inspector
David Smth	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Hundred of Hoo Academy became a sponsored academy on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, The Hundred of Hoo Comprehensive School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be a satisfactory school.
- The Hundred of Hoo Academy is a larger than average-sized secondary school and has a sixth form. It is located within an area that operates a selective school system. The academy is a member of The Williamson Trust, which includes a nearby grammar school for boys and two local primary schools. An executive Principal provides support to all four schools and the academy is run by a head of school.
- The academy operates a resourced provision, for around 50 students with autism, called the St Werburgh Centre.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly in line with the national average.
- The majority of students are White British. Consequently, the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above that found nationally. The proportion of students supported through school action is just above average, whereas the proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend vocational courses off site, where they study hairdressing, business, engineering, car maintenance, plumbing, electrics and construction.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise students' attainment so they achieve better GCSE grades which are consistently above the national average in all subjects by:
  - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
  - encouraging students to work independently and developing their investigative skills in lessons so that they do not rely on their teachers too much
  - ensuring that all teachers adjust the work to match more closely the needs of every student in the class, including challenging tasks for the most able students
  - working with the few teachers whose lessons require improvement to maximise on students' positive attitudes to learning by planning lessons which are more exciting and creative
  - making sure that every student responds to the very helpful marking provided by the large majority of teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with levels of attainment that are well below average. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, they make good progress. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, has risen sharply to bring it closer in line with the national average.
- Students achieve better in some subjects than in others. They perform well in English and mathematics, but do less well in science, and design and technology.
- Students' progress at Key Stage 3 is continuing to move on at a quicker pace. This is due to a number of factors including: improvements in teaching, after-school support, the setting of students according to their ability, and a drive on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- The academy's focus on improving students' skills in literacy and numeracy is having an impact on their levels of progress. The Young Writers club for students in Years 7 to 13 encourages them to write in a range of styles. In addition, good systems for tracking students' achievement ensure that support is offered before it is too late. Leaders and managers have an accurate picture not only of how well different groups of students are doing, but also of how well individual students are achieving.
- A majority of parents and carers rightly believe that their children are making good progress. Data gathered by the academy show that all students are progressing at a much faster rate than previously. Evidence gathered by inspectors through observing students achieve in lessons and asking them about their learning supports the academy's view.
- The academy enters some students early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. Leaders believe this approach offers students the greatest chance of succeeding in these subjects and school data show that attainment in both subjects is rising.
- The academy has used its pupil premium to fund a range of activities and support for eligible students. Activities have included a summer school for 40 primary pupils in Year 6 to raise standards in English and mathematics, the production of a school magazine to develop literacy skills in Year 7, one-to-one tuition, examination revision workshops and the appointment of an academic mentor. These activities have helped students entitled to pupil premium funding to achieve at least as well as similar students nationally, and sometimes better.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress over time. The gaps in attainment between students working at school action, school action plus or with the support of a statement of special educational needs and other students in the academy are narrowing. Students with autism are very well provided for through the St Werburgh Centre and achieve well. White British students make good progress over time. Leaders actively promote equal opportunities, foster positive relations and tackle any form of discrimination.
- Those students who follow more practical courses off site enjoy the opportunity to gain experience in a range of practical subjects and acquire the necessary skills to find suitable employment or further training.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students in the sixth form enjoy their studies and an

increasing proportion are gaining top grades at A level. More and more students are expressing a desire to continue with their studies at university.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- Students mostly experience good teaching. Sometimes it can be outstanding and, occasionally, some still requires improvement. The better teaching helps students make at least expected progress, whatever their ability. This is because these teachers have a good understanding of students in their classes and plan work carefully to meet their specific needs.
- In a Year 8 history lesson on workers' rights which featured good teaching, the teacher checked that students understood what they were learning through skilfully targeted questioning. This teacher's strong subject knowledge, combined with helpful marking, made sure that students made good progress.
- Some teaching still requires improvement, although this is steadily decreasing. These teachers do not always plan their lessons carefully enough to ensure the needs of all students are met fully. Sometimes this can slow down their progress which means that the most-able students may not achieve their potential. Students are not given the opportunity to work independently enough and they then become too reliant on the teacher to provide the answers to questions.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is regular and very useful because the vast majority of marking indicates clearly what students have to do to improve. Consequently, most students know their target grades and how to achieve them. However, not all students respond to the guidance their teachers provide for them.
- Good teaching makes a significant contribution to the development of students' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Inspectors' scrutiny of students' books shows that these skills are being well taught and, as a result, are improving rapidly.
- Additional adults in the classroom, including teaching assistants, provide valuable support. Positive relationships between them and the students they support mean that these students willingly ask for help. The adults have a good understanding of students' individual needs and help them to achieve the task for themselves, rather than doing it for them.
- Records of the quality of teaching kept by senior staff and heads of subject areas are detailed and accurate. When inspectors observed teaching with senior staff, they agreed with all their judgements. The majority of parents and carers also rightly believe that the quality of teaching is good in the academy.
- Some of the stronger teaching can be found in the sixth form, where students make good gains in their learning. Typical teaching in the sixth form features strong subject knowledge, high expectations and opportunities for students to develop independence.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students display positive attitudes in lessons. They are less likely to become distracted because most teachers take account of their specific needs when planning lessons. Very few lessons

observed featured anything less than good behaviour.

- Students' behaviour around the academy is good and they generally arrive punctually to lessons, bearing in mind the distance they have to cover within the large school site. Students told inspectors that behaviour has improved greatly, and that they feel safe when in the academy.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions is falling year on year and there have been two permanent exclusions since the academy opened in 2011. The number of students removed from lessons temporarily, but kept in school, has also declined. The academy maintains meticulous records relating to exclusions so that leaders can identify any trends and come up with solutions. A programme for mentoring students with challenging behaviour has had proven success.
- A small proportion of parents and carers expressed concern about how well the academy deals with bullying. Inspectors found procedures for dealing with instances of bullying to be robust. Students are encouraged to report any instances of bullying, and they told inspectors they are confident that any that is reported will be dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The academy analyses attendance figures very closely and takes prompt action if there are any indications of the start of a downward trend.
- The provision of after-school activities and the wide range of opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development create a positive atmosphere and encourage students to make the most of the good opportunities they have.
- The promotion of equal opportunities has a high profile in the academy. Leaders monitor the performance of different groups of students, including those who are carers for members of their families, as well as monitoring outcomes for students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Students whose situation makes them more vulnerable to underachievement told inspectors they feel well cared for in 'The Haven'. This serves as a useful resource which provides support not only for these students, but for anyone who wishes to make use of the facility. Students told inspectors that if they go to 'The Haven' for help 'things will get done'.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The executive Principal rightly has confidence in the ability of the head of school to drive up standards, being ably supported by the senior leadership team. All members of staff share a common goal in providing the best opportunities for all students.
- The sharp focus on making everyone accountable for their performance has brought about a rapid change in the quality of teaching and the rise in attainment in 2012. Learning, progress and the quality of teaching are monitored regularly and thoroughly, and they are closely linked to teachers' performance and pay increases. Leaders' and managers' observations of lessons identify good practice which can be shared and also trigger support when teaching requires improvement.

- Heads of subjects and heads of year are confident in leading initiatives in their area and the effective training they receive allows them to have a clearer understanding of the strengths of the academy and the remaining areas for development. For example, they are aware of the need to improve outcomes for the most-able students.
- The Williamson Trust provides effective support and the Academy benefits from good working relationships with member schools. The Academy has drawn on the experience of the other Trust secondary school and has shared its expertise on, for example, moderation of coursework and pupil tracking.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to develop as fully rounded individuals. Setting arrangements by ability in Key Stage 3 still allow for students to move between groups, if their performance improves or declines. The choice of subjects at Key Stage 4 is wide and they are not tied down to one particular type of qualification.
- Students enjoy the wide range of clubs, sports, performing arts activities and educational visits on offer. They have participated in the Medway Schools' Dance Festival, the Medway Media Conference, and have made visits to Christmas markets in Germany. They also staged a version of J B Priestley's play, *An Inspector Calls*, during the inspection.
- The academy's arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements.
- Leadership of the sixth form has strengthened with the support of the head of school. Sixth form tutors have a greater understanding of their role in monitoring progress and challenging underperformance. Consequently, students' outcomes continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have played a key role in raising standards in the academy. They challenge the academy's leaders and managers regularly. Most recently, when examining students' performance data, they questioned not only how well different groups of students were performing, but also whether their targets were challenging and realistic enough. They check regularly what impact the pupil premium funding is having on improving achievement for the eligible group of students, and monitor the academy's budget rigorously to ensure the academy continues to offer value for money. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the academy and attend almost all of its training sessions for staff. Records of meetings of the governing body show that they ask challenging questions about the quality of teaching, the achievement of different groups of students and the management of staff performance and salary progression.

## 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>	137119
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	399857

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<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>	1,322
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Clough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Vyse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 251443
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