

# Nova Hreod

Akers Way, Moredon, Swindon, SN2 2NQ

## Inspection dates

29–30 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few students who completed examination courses in Year 11 did not make consistently good progress across a range of subjects.
- Although the quality of teaching has improved, a small number of teachers do not deliver lessons where students are sufficiently challenged to make progress.
- Improvements in teaching have not had sufficient time to ensure all students are making consistently good progress.
- A very small minority of students do not fully engage in their lessons and behave in a way that does not meet the high expectations of the school. This is not always picked up quickly enough.
- The attendance of some groups of students, including disabled, and those with special educational needs and those supported by pupil premium, is below that of their peers.

### The school has the following strengths

- All leaders, including governors, clearly understand that there remains work to be done, to ensure current improvements are maintained and built on. The Principal has a clear strategic vision that is driven with passion and determination.
- Current achievement in lessons is mainly good. Students are on track to make much better progress in external examination results than in previous years.
- Teaching is good or better in many lessons and is ensuring students make rapid progress.
- The majority of students behave well. They are polite and respectful of themselves, each other, staff and visitors.
- The school proactively promotes student safety, through robust safeguarding systems and anti bullying work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed parts of 41 lessons, 15 of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school day including an assembly, tutor time, students' behaviour at break and lunchtime, and their arrival to school.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views of 60 staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- They observed the work of the school, looking at a wide range of documentation, including minutes, performance management, self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of student learning, attendance and behaviour, and the quality of teaching. The school development plan and safeguarding documents were studied.

## Inspection team

Kevin Harrison, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional inspector
Svetlana Bajic-Raymond	Additional inspector
Glenn Mayoh	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Nova Hreod is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school.
- Two new Vice-Principals joined the school in January 2013.
- Most students are from White British heritage, with a small number of students from other minority ethnic groups. Almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and students from service families, is above the national average.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion of students at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- Some students attend courses off-site at Swindon College and the Oakfield project.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is currently planning to convert to an academy.

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

- Raise achievement by making sure that all teaching is at least good by: ensuring all teachers plan and deliver lessons that take into account what all groups of students can do and how they best learn, to ensure they make progress.
- Improve teaching further by ensuring all teaching is at least good by:
  - eliminating any inadequate teaching
  - ensuring that lessons are thoroughly planned, enabling all groups of learners to make good progress from their starting point
  - exploiting opportunities to develop students' communication and numeracy skills across the whole curriculum
  - providing clear, regular feedback to students on their progress, with precise guidance on how to further improve
  - addressing any poor behaviour in lessons quickly and not allowing it to disrupt the learning of other students.
- Improve attendance further by working with families whose children are not attending school as well as they should be, particularly those who have a special educational need and those in receipt of pupil premium funding.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because examination results have not been sufficiently high enough across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Students join the school with average standards. The number of students gaining five or more GCSE higher grades continues to rise, but is below the national average.
- The 2012 results show an improvement from 2011, but rates of progress for too many students are not good enough.
- However, this is the fifth year of a rising trend of results.
- There has been a strong improvement in the number of students achieving the highest possible grades, but this still remains below the national average.
- The school's detailed monitoring clearly shows that current Year 11 students are making good progress and are on target to build on the improved results seen in 2012. Further improvements in student achievement can be seen throughout the entire school.
- Student achievement is accelerating as the quality of teaching improves. There are examples of this across the entire curriculum, but it is not yet sufficiently embedded to reverse the period of weaker teaching in the past.
- A few students are educated off-site. They achieve as well as other students, doing particularly well in their specialist subjects.
- The progress of students with special educational needs has been uneven. In 2012, students with a statement of special educational needs made better overall progress than those students supported through school action and school action plus.
- The average point scores achieved by students who receive the pupil premium are improving and the gap in their achievement is closing from that of other students. Between 2011 and 2012, the gap reduced overall, including in English, and more so in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching over a sustained period of time has not led to good achievement. It is however, improving with a growing proportion of lessons that are good or better where students make rapid progress.
- Despite much improvement in teaching, there remains some inconsistency between lessons.
- There remains teaching that requires improvement or which in a minority of lessons is sometimes inadequate. In these weaker lessons, the needs of individual students are not planned for appropriately. Not enough account of is taken of what they already know and understand, so progress is too slow.
- Nearly all teachers clearly explain what they expect the students to learn, checking understanding and the progress throughout the lesson.
- Many lessons are well planned and taught where the teacher uses their strong subject knowledge to enthuse the students about their learning, setting the work at just the right level for them to make good progress. However, sometimes work is set which is too easy or too hard, so progress is too slow.
- In the best lessons, teachers skilfully question students, probing and challenging to extend their understanding. This is not consistent practice; in the weaker lessons, questioning is too general and only involves a few students.
- The pace of learning is too slow in some lessons, particularly when students spend a long time just listening to teachers without any checking of understanding or becoming actively involved in the learning.

- In the best lessons opportunities to develop students' numeracy and communication skills are exploited, but too often missed in the lessons that require improvement.
- Ongoing verbal feedback is a strength of many lessons, ensuring students know how well they are doing. While there are some examples of excellent marking with clear advice on how to improve, it is not consistently so, with variance both within and across subject areas.
- Students know their levels and target grades but are too frequently unsure of exactly what they need to do to improve their work. This is further exaggerated when books have not been marked thoroughly or frequently enough.
- Teaching assistants are appropriately used and provide effective support to students with special educational needs so they can effectively learn alongside their peers.
- Learning mentors funded through the pupil premium grant work with targeted students to assist them to raise their educational achievement. Current tracking shows that these students are now making better progress, in line with their peers, including in mathematics and English.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****require improvement**

- Most students behave well, making Nova a welcoming, friendly place. A very small number of students behave inappropriately.
- Students told inspectors that, while behaviour has improved overall, in lessons, behaviour largely depends on the teacher and the quality of teaching, and inspection findings support these views. In some weaker lessons, students' poor behaviour is not picked up quickly enough.
- A new behaviour system was introduced in September. This encourages students to be 'green learners', which means they are actively involved in their learning. Those students who are not, receive an 'amber' warning. This gives students the opportunity to address their actions, and to become fully involved in their learning again, and so return to being a 'green learner'. This has had a positive impact, and is being applied with more consistency. Students clearly understand the process and most actively adopt the appropriate behaviour.
- There has been a reduction in the number of incidents which result in students 'turning red' and being removed from lessons.
- This has also seen the already low fixed-term exclusions reduce even further.
- The school closely monitors attendance, which is improving overall and is in line with the national average. Some groups, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, and some pupil premium students, are not attending as well as they should be with the result that they are not achieving to their full potential.
- Students state that bullying is rare. When it does occur, it is swiftly dealt with by the school. They have a clear understanding of different types of bullying, particularly cyber-bullying.
- The attendance and behaviour of students who are taught off-site is carefully monitored, so enabling these students to make progress in their social development and learning.
- Students feel safe and well supported in school and feel well prepared to ensure they can keep themselves safe beyond school.
- Many students show high moral and social concerns and actively raise funds for national and local charities, including collecting food for the Swindon food bank.
- Students are respectful of themselves, friends, staff and visitors regardless of their background. The school has links with schools in France, Spain, Germany and South Africa.

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

- All key leaders consistently communicate high expectations and ambition. Teaching is improving and this is having an impact on student achievement in lessons.
  - The Principal demonstrates an energetic, determined and relentless approach to raise standards. She is well supported by other senior and middle leaders.
  - There is a shared determination and excellent capacity to continue to make further improvement.
  - All leaders clearly understand how to further support and hold staff to account to ensure all students make good progress.
  - The school has a thorough approach to self-evaluation, which has enabled detailed and effective planning to improve teaching, and this is having an impact on raising student achievement. Improvement areas are accurately identified and underpin actions which are embraced by all senior and middle leaders and shared by other staff.
  - Teaching is monitored with precision and focuses on the impact it is having on student achievement. Performance management is used effectively to both support and challenge all staff. There is a rigorous approach to addressing staff who are not meeting the required standards in the classroom. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
  - The monitoring of students' progress is robust. This ensures that any barriers to learning faced by any group of students can be removed, so they do not face discrimination and make progress.
  - Pupil premium funding is carefully targeted. Examples include providing students in Key Stage 4 with revision material in each of their examination subjects, and all pupil premium students in Years 8 and 9 have an intensive careers interview to raise aspirations.
  - Staff, particularly teachers, are continually developed through a wide range of training and support both within and beyond the school. Teachers work well together, coaching each other to develop and refine best practice so that it can be shared across the whole school. As a result, teaching is improving.
  - Teachers feel supported by the leaders of the school to make further improvements to their teaching; this is highly valued.
  - The curriculum is well planned. All Year 10 now study the English Baccalaureate subjects, including a modern foreign language. While this has slightly limited student choice, it provides a firm foundation for future study and employment. There remains strong links with Swindon College and the Oakfield project where some students can access vocational courses, which maintains their interest in education and provides clear opportunities for future employment.
  - Students are welcoming and open to the views of others, regardless of their background or culture, and whether they are students, staff or visitors. This is effectively supported through the well-organised tutor time, and visits with good opportunities for personal reflection.
  - The house system encourages students to be fully involved in a wide range of activities, including fundraising for local and national charities, so preparing students to be responsible citizens. There are a wide range of opportunities for students to develop their artistic and cultural development through visits and events such as 'Nova's Got Talent' and the inter-house Eisteddfod.
  - The local authority provides effective support across a range of priorities which has contributed to the improvements in teaching. The Principal works with other local authority heads sharing best practice and is currently vice-chair of Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers.
  - The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are strong and fully meet all statutory requirements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body has a clear vision of where the school needs to be. It is accurately informed and knows the school's strengths and key areas for development well. Governors effectively use their wide range of expertise to challenge the Principal on all aspects of leadership and management to ensure the improvements to teaching and student
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achievement are maintained and further built on.

- The governing body skilfully manages the school's finances and has a clear understanding of how the allocation of pupil premium funding is spent, ensuring it is appropriately targeted and its impact evaluated. Through the training they have received, governors clearly understand information provided on student outcomes, and the results of performance management. Governors are aware of the progression in salaries following performance management and how weaker teaching is being addressed and improved.

## 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>	126465
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	402398

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,053
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Porter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Tridgell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 October 2009
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