

Hove Park School and Sixth Form Centre

Neville Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 7BN

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. Results for Year 11 students have improved significantly year-on-year so that the proportion of A* to C grades is now in line with national averages and progress across a very large majority of subjects is good with evidence of further improvement.
- The rapid improvement in students' achievement is a direct result of the transformation in teaching, which is now good and in some cases outstanding.
- Students recognise and appreciate the positive changes in the school and say that this has helped to improve their achievement and their behaviour. Behaviour is good, attendance is improving rapidly and exclusions are falling.
- The recently appointed headteacher's ambition and determination permeates and motivates the whole school. His promise of improvement, particularly in teaching and achievement, has been realised and his vision for the future is shared by senior and middle leaders as well as the governing body. Students, staff, and parents and carers are extremely proud to be associated with the school.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not yet outstanding because students do not use their numeracy skills as well as they use their literacy skills.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding as students are not always challenged enough to bring about outstanding learning.
- Teachers do not give enough individual feedback to students about how to improve their work.
- Occasionally, students do not have enough time to find things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 lessons, of which 14 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of students and looked at samples of their work, focusing on progress and marking as well as the achievement of those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed 205 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 58 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents including performance management information, safeguarding documentation, the governing body minutes and case studies of vulnerable students.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional Inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional Inspector
Roger Parry	Additional Inspector
Philip Storey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hove Park School and Sixth Form Centre is a mixed 11 to 18 school which is significantly larger than most other secondary schools. The school is situated on two sites with students in Years 7 to 9 on one and students in Years 10 to 13 on the other.
- The large majority of students are White British with small numbers of African, Asian and Bangladeshi students. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A reducing number of students attend alternative provision off-site programmes at Plumpton College covering animal care, environmental science and motor vehicle maintenance, as well as Northbrook College covering catering and hospitality.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students who make outstanding progress and the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - raising the level of challenge to promote excellent learning in all sessions
 - developing students' higher-order thinking skills and greater independence in learning
 - using assessment consistently to provide more individual feedback to students
 - making sure that students use their numeracy skills as effectively as their literacy skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Results for Year 11 students have improved significantly year-on-year and the proportion of A* to C grades has risen sharply with evidence to suggest a further increase in 2013 on the basis of examinations already taken. Attainment in the sixth form has risen considerably since the previous inspection and is now average. All students passed their A-level examinations in 2012.
- Improvements in English and mathematics have meant that the proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress in English compare favourably with national figures while the progress of students in mathematics is rising rapidly as a result of improved teaching and earlier intervention for underperforming students. The progress of students across a very large majority of their subjects is now good with performance information suggesting further improvement in 2013.
- Lesson observations, work samples and student discussions confirm that disabled students and those who have special educational needs, as well as students from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well. This is because they are known to teachers and their individual needs, including support for literacy, are effectively supported in the classroom.
- Students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium have GCSE average points scores equivalent to one grade below their peers but this gap is narrowing rapidly as a result of the school's concerted effort to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after. Early-entry results in English and mathematics confirm that these students are now catching up with their peers.
- The progress of students in the sixth form has improved over the last three years and is broadly average, and better in vocational subjects such as travel and tourism. Changes in the leadership and management of the sixth form, improvements in teaching and learning, and more frequent checking of progress are bringing better results.
- Students who attend alternative off-site provision achieve well.
- Students are entered for GCSE English early at the end of Year 10 and those meeting or exceeding their challenging target grade continue with a course leading to the award of GCSE English literature. Students in mathematics are following a modular examination with those who do not do well being entered for the linear examination at the end of the course.
- Students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Students develop good communication skills. This supports good learning because they are confident in joining discussions and asking and answering questions. Students' numeracy skills are not as strong as their literacy skills with opportunities missed in some lessons to promote numeracy further.
- Parents and carers who expressed a view were overwhelmingly positive about the progress their child was making at the school and confirmed that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good and increasingly outstanding. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and observations made during the inspection confirmed the accuracy of the school's judgments as well as the quality of feedback offered by senior staff. Teaching in the sixth form is good and often better.
- The majority of teachers have consistently high expectations of their students, as reflected in the lesson objectives and the tasks being undertaken. Teachers are successful in creating a positive learning environment where students enjoy learning and are eager to achieve. Strong and supportive relationships mean that students learn effectively.
- For example, in an outstanding physical education lesson, the positive relationships between the teacher and the students ensured their committed engagement and high levels of motivation to

improve their skills. The lesson was further enhanced by the use of technology, supporting students' visual learning and helping them to develop their badminton skills.

- A small minority of lessons require improvement. In these lessons, teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of the spread of ability in the class or make sure that able students are stretched with work which challenges their ability, promotes higher-order thinking and encourages their independence in learning.
- The quality of assessment is variable. In the very large majority of cases, assessment is used consistently to offer personalised feedback to students with regular marking providing students with clear guidance on the level of their work and how to improve. However, this is not consistent across the school with a few examples of poor presentation unchecked and poor spelling not corrected.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to help those students who need additional support for their learning. Support for students who have special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium is particularly strong. This ensures that these students make similar progress to their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' attitudes to learning are positive and determined. Students told inspectors that behaviour had improved, is now typically good, and that the 'Choices and Consequences' system has led to a greater consistency in the application of sanctions across the school. There is now a focus on positive behaviour and the recognition of individual progress and achievement. A 'Behaviour Monitoring Group' regularly reviews behaviour records and provides intervention and support where necessary. The behaviour of students attending off-site provision is good.
- Students say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly and effectively. They are aware of different types of bullying and say that the school takes a strong line against any student using derogatory language related to ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.
- Parents' and carers' responses to Parent View were positive about behaviour and the effectiveness with which the school deals with bullying. A very large majority of parents and carers confirmed that their child was happy, safe and well looked after.
- Attendance has improved significantly over the last two years and the proportion of students who are regularly absent is reducing. Attendance in the sixth form is rising so that attendance figures across the school are now in line with national averages. Students on both sites are punctual to lessons.
- Sixth-form students make a positive contribution to the life of the school through sporting activities, drama performances, reading support for younger students, performing in the Youth Arts Festival and involvement in a range of external competitions.
- Assemblies, tutor time and the school's programme of philosophy and ethics contribute positively to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

The leadership and management are good

- In a relatively short period of time, the headteacher, supported by his senior management team, has been relentless and determined in securing improvements in students' achievement. He has transformed the leadership structure, introduced new appointments and reassigned roles to secure greater consistency, purpose and accountability.
- Leaders at all levels, as well as members of the governing body, have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which they are tackling with determination and rigour. The school's focus on 'putting achievement first' pervades the work of senior management and is understood and pursued by all staff at all levels.

- The leadership of teaching and learning has been at the centre of the drive for improvement. Subject-focused inspections have led to the greater involvement and commitment of leaders in charge of subjects and different aspects of the school's work. Regular lesson observations, supported by learning walks, performance information analysis and individual feedback, have meant that the quality of teaching is improving with additional support targeted where needed.
 - There is a close link between teachers' performance and pay awards with robust targets closely linked to the school's priorities and student achievement. Staff have good opportunities for training including the opportunity to join a 'shadow leadership team' and work on development activities such as the introduction of new technology. Staff morale is high. The overwhelming majority of responses to the staff questionnaire were positive.
 - The recently revised way that subjects and topics are taught is broad and balanced, offering ample opportunities for students of all abilities to study a range of courses aligned to the English Baccalaureate as well as off-site provision covering animal care, catering, hospitality and motor vehicle maintenance.
 - Students' experiences are extended through a vast range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities at home and abroad, ranging from trips to Iceland for geography and Barcelona for art to raising money for charities and involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. These contribute significantly to their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and all staff have received training in safeguarding and child protection.
 - Parents and carers agree that the school is well led and managed. Their views are summed up in one comment received which said, 'Thank you for reaffirming my belief that passion, drive and commitment can really make the difference.'
 - The local authority confirms that the school has improved considerably since the last inspection and that they are encouraged by the improvements in behaviour, teaching and achievement. The local authority provides appropriate advice and support in terms of human resources, teaching and learning, and governor training.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school well and asks leaders searching questions about its work. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and about the achievement of pupils and how this compares with all schools nationally. They actively check the work of the school, and they are aware of the quality of teaching and informed about targets set to improve teachers' performance. They make sure that the pupil premium is targeted at the right students and used effectively to raise their achievement. Governors know how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance, and they make sure that pay rises are linked to good performance. External and internal training for governors has been beneficial.
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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

Unique reference number	114607
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	401454

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,601
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Nicholls
Headteacher	Derek Trimmer
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 February 2010
Telephone number	01273 295000
Fax number	01273 295009
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