

Hazel Grove High School

Jacksons Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 5JX

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Students make good progress and learn well in many subjects. Since the previous inspection the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has remained above the national average, and standards seen in many lessons are above average.
- Students who are behind with their reading and numeracy skills when they start at the academy catch up quickly, and those identified as disabled or having special educational needs make particularly good progress.
- Teaching is good in most subjects. For the most part, lessons include interesting activities and experiences.
- Students are proud to attend the academy. They feel safe and well looked after. Students behave well and attendance is above average. There is little bullying and there are few exclusions.
- The headteacher is an effective leader and exudes high expectations. She is well supported by leaders and managers at all levels. Governors are well informed about the performance of the academy and are ambitious to ensure that teaching and achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few lessons do not motivate all learners because they are not given enough time to think or work collaboratively. Some teachers do not check sufficiently well on students' understanding during lessons.
- On occasions, the abilities of all students are not fully stretched, and the marking of students' work does not always lead to improvement.
- While arrangements to check the quality of the academy's work are rigorous, analysis of its effectiveness is not detailed enough. Plans for improvement do not always have precise targets and actions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to tutor groups.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, governors and academy staff, including senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- They observed the academy’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the academy’s own data on current students’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
Jane Alexander	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hazel Grove is an average-sized secondary school which converted to an academy in March 2012. On its last inspection the predecessor, Hazel Grove High School, was judged to be satisfactory (grade 3).
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, largely those known to be eligible for free school meals, is rising but below that seen nationally.
- The proportion of students supported at the level known as school action is similar to the proportion seen nationally, but above for those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are few students from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language.
- The academy meets the current floor standard which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Students follow a range of academic and vocational courses on the academy's site. A specialist on-site resource centre makes additional provision for students with severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. The academy offers no alternative, off-site learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently at least good in all subjects, and that much more is outstanding, by:
 - making certain that activities and experiences are inspiring and well matched to individual students' aptitudes
 - providing regular opportunities for students to work with each other to deepen their understanding
 - making certain that all teachers systematically check all students' understanding in lessons and meet any emerging needs by adapting work when necessary, so that they learn exceptionally well
 - making certain that marking which points out why students are doing well, and provides advice about the next steps in their learning, results in subsequent improvement.
- Ensure that all leaders and managers, including governors, constantly assess the effectiveness of the academy's work against precise targets and expectations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of students on entry to the academy varies but is generally similar to that of most schools. The vast majority achieve well and, as a consequence, by the end of Year 11 the proportions of students attaining five good GCSE results, and also when including English and mathematics, are above average. Overall attainment in mathematics, science, and design and technology, the academy's former specialisms, is well above average.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well. Consequently, attainment gaps, including average points scores in English and mathematics, between these students and their peers have closed significantly since the previous inspection. This is because tracking arrangements have been improved, enabling underperformance to be tackled earlier and more successfully. The small number of students from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with their peers. Well-conceived use of the pupil premium has enhanced small-group teaching opportunities, providing additional time and staffing, and funding additional resources to boost successfully students' reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- In most subjects increasing numbers of students attain above-average outcomes. Many communicate with confidence, both orally and in writing, and show good numerical skills. Regular opportunities to read in many lessons, and at lunchtimes, enhance students' understanding of written texts.
- A large proportion of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children enjoy attending the academy and achieve well. Inspectors found this to be so in many lessons seen. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson students collaborated exceptionally well to find the square roots of numbers which are not perfect squares, inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm and passion. Similarly, Year 11 students shared eagerly ideas about how different audiences are targeted by the music press, in a media lesson on advertising.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is good, but there are few examples of outstanding practice. Nonetheless, most students make good progress and achieve well in many subjects.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers have high expectations and plan lessons to stimulate and engage quickly all learners. They create interesting climates so that students are eager to become involved and enjoy their learning. For example, in a Year 8 drama lesson students collaborated highly effectively to explore the use of different sounds for dramatic effect, enthused by the 'Lochness Monster' song, and motivated by opportunities to find things out for themselves. Similarly, in a Year 8 history lesson students became increasingly less reliant on the teacher as they shared ideas and developed opinions, in small groups, about racism in Elizabethan times. Specialist teaching of students with severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders is a strength.
- In the good lessons teachers routinely check students' understanding, intervening when necessary, to impact on their learning. They provide timely opportunities for students to enhance their communication skills through talking with partners and challenging each other's views. In scenarios that require accurate mathematical understanding they ensure that all students are confident in measuring and calculating, and in representing important data in graphs and charts. Teaching assistants work very well, supporting individuals and small groups of students with special educational needs to good effect, both in and out of lessons.
- Where teaching is not as effective as it might be, it does not provide enough stimulus or challenge. Some teachers talk too much, spending too long exploring examination requirements. As a consequence, students are not inspired, immersed as quickly as they might be in their

learning or provided with enough time to deepen their understanding. Some teachers do not take enough opportunity to listen to students or observe them at length, in order to check their understanding before intervening and adapting work if necessary.

- The quality of marking across the school is good on the whole. It is not always as effective as it could be because students are not encouraged sufficiently, by some teachers, to act on advice provided and subsequently improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Around the academy students' behaviour is very good. They are polite and courteous to adults and visitors. Parents indicate how much their children enjoy the many extra-curricular activities and visits on offer. In lessons their attitudes are mostly very positive. On occasions, when learning is not inviting and motivating, the concentration of some students wanes and they become restless and overly chatty.
- The quality of pastoral care and welfare arrangements is excellent. Attendance is rising and above average, and exclusions are falling and are low. Students say that they always feel safe in the academy. They are confident that they can get support if they have any concerns. Pastoral staff secure very effectively the well-being of students whose circumstances may render them vulnerable. In particular, they ensure that disabled students and those with severe learning needs are fully integrated into the school's daily experiences.
- The school council promotes well a climate of togetherness and well-being. Most students are fully aware of unsafe situations and show confidence in dealing with them, should they occur. They are especially assured in talking about cyber- and homophobic bullying. However, 'form time' is not yet used effectively enough to enhance all students' social and moral development.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious for all students and has raised expectations of staff and students' aspirations over time. Since the previous inspection she has developed more robust tracking arrangements that now provide an accurate picture of all students' achievements, and sustained and improved above-average attainment by the end of Year 11. The quality of teaching has improved and the curriculum has also been matched more closely to students' needs.
- Changes in leaders with particular responsibilities have strengthened the academy's overall procedures to check how well it is doing, but the analysis of its effectiveness is not detailed enough. As a consequence, while judgments made about its work are generally accurate, they are not always supported by sharp and robust evidence. Plans for improvement do not have sufficiently precise targets and measures against which success can be tested.
- Performance management of staff is well organised and new appraisal arrangements identify clearly each individual's needs. A range of training experiences is now available to develop more good and outstanding teaching. The headteacher makes the right decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale on the basis of robust information about the quality of their teaching.
- The academy's curriculum is appropriately matched to students' needs. Disabled students and those with special, and severe, educational needs are very well catered for. There is a good range of academic courses, underpinned by the school's former mathematics, science, and design and technology specialisms, and a judicious balance of vocational opportunities delivered on the school's site. All precautions are taken to ensure that students entered early for GCSE examinations are ready and that this activity does not limit their potential.
- Extensive sporting, musical and performing experiences, and a wealth of extra-curricular activities including mathematical code-breaking, make strong contributions to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The House system helps to promote students' personal qualities and supports effectively the school's drive to promote equality of opportunity. House

leaders and progress tutors, in particular, work hard to tackle swiftly any discrimination that may arise.

- Parent View indicates that a large proportion of parents would wholeheartedly recommend the academy. Good partnerships exist with local schools, colleges of further education, universities and community services. All partnership working has a positive impact on students' achievements. The local authority provides effective support through a school improvement adviser and has been helpful in moderating the academy's work.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is highly ambitious on behalf of the academy and governors are very committed to ensuring the best provision for all students. They receive regular information about the performance of the academy, including data about how well students are achieving. Minutes of meetings show that they are confident in challenging the headteacher and senior staff. They reveal robust discussions about the value of spending decisions, in particular the allocation of pupil premium funding. For example, governors have authorised additional staffing for small groups and the purchase of bespoke materials to boost reading and writing skills across Years 7 to 9. They are less assured in evaluating the impact of separate initiatives and in determining precisely whether all outcomes are high enough. Arrangements for the annual review of the headteacher's performance are robust, and governors are made aware about the salaries of all staff and decisions about individual teachers' applications for promotion. Nonetheless, governors do not yet have a detailed enough understanding of the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance across the academy.

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	137923
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	406686

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	985
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Keith Harrington
Principal	Ms Joanne Nolan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 4564888
Fax number	0161 4563961
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