

Hagley Park Academy

Burnthill Lane, Rugeley, WS15 2HZ

Inspection dates

23–24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- The sixth form requires improvement. Achievement in A- and AS-level examinations in 2012 was poor, and while current students make adequate progress overall, there remains too much variation in achievement between courses.
- Achievement in some GCSE subjects, for example mathematics, is not as high as it should be, but it is improving quickly.
- Students' work is not always marked regularly or in enough detail by every teacher. As a result, students do not always know how to improve their work.
- Teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 does not help all students make good progress. The work set by some teachers does not build well enough on students' prior learning. This leads to some students not paying enough attention to the task they are attempting.
- A small minority of students misbehave when they are not engaged in the lesson. This misbehaviour is not dealt with by all teachers in a consistent way. Incidents of lesson disruption have increased.
- Attendance has fallen this year despite a wide range of actions targeted at students at risk of persistent absence.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management are good. Achievement has improved significantly for all students when compared to results from the predecessor school.
- Students achieve well in work-related (vocational) subjects.
- Support for students who need additional help for their learning is good, and they achieve well.
- The downward trend of sixth form performance has been reversed through effective recent leadership action.
- Better advice and guidance for sixth form students have improved the retention of students on courses.
- Additional funding to support students eligible for the pupil premium is used very effectively to improve their progress, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons and 30 teachers. Other aspects of the academy's work were also observed, including activities held as part of the 'Life and Soul' day which ran throughout the first day of the inspection. Normal timetables are suspended for all students on 'Life and Soul' days throughout the year to allow them to engage in a programme of personal, social, health, citizenship and religious education.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, executive principal, assistant principals, director of education of the Creative Education Academies Trust, local governors, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, leaders of support for students who need additional help, the student council and other groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) received prior to and during the inspection, and 68 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors evaluated the academy's work, scrutinised data on students' achievement, examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body and procedures for safeguarding students. They took account of the academy's external survey of parents and students.

Inspection team

Brian Cartwright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Bob Roberts

Additional Inspector

Ahson Mohammed

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hagley Park Academy is smaller than most other secondary schools. It became a sponsor-led academy in September 2011. The sponsor is the Creative Education Academies Trust (CEAT), whose mission is 'to promote the improvement of educational opportunity for young people in the UK and to enhance the role of design in schools'.
- The academy forms part of the Rugeley Academies, which serve the town of Rugeley, together with its neighbour and federated partner, Fair Oak Academy. Both academies share the operation of a small sixth form, the Rugeley Sixth Form Academy, which is located on a separate site about a mile and a half away. All three academies were inspected at the same time.
- The academies have a single leadership team headed by an executive principal, and a single local governing body. Each academy has its own headteacher. The acting executive principal took up his post on 15 April 2013, following the retirement of his predecessor.
- Almost all students are White British.
- An average proportion of students are eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government, mainly for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after in public care).
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The academy's examination results exceed government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 by:
 - using the information teachers have about the prior learning and abilities of their students to ensure lesson activities build upon this for each student, capture their interest and attention, and promote students' active participation in learning
 - ensuring that regular marking consistently informs students of what has gone well, gives clear advice on what they should do next to further improve that work, and then provide students with the opportunity to act on that advice.
- Improve students' attainment, progress and retention in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that students who join the sixth form are given the best possible advice and guidance so that they enrol only for courses which fully suit their interests and abilities
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching and the rate of students' progress in the sixth form are monitored and supported with at least as much rigour as they are in the main academy
 - offering activities within and beyond academic subjects which enrich students' experiences, develop their leadership skills and promote their personal development.
- Ensure the consistent application by all staff of the academy's behaviour policy in order to minimise low-level disruption.
- Review and improve the effectiveness of strategies to improve attendance, in particular the impact of external agencies in tackling persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress students are making is not leading to high enough standards in every subject. The courses that students took in 2012 did not provide the majority of them with a broad and balanced range of qualifications, but focused too heavily on vocational courses. Overall progress in GCSE subjects was low in mathematics, science, humanities and languages, but average in English. A small group studying English literature did very well.
- Once the vocational courses are included in comparisons with national data, the overall attainment in 2012 was higher than average, and progress that includes students' best eight subjects was average in 2012. Students in all subjects achieved much better grades in 2012 than in the predecessor school in 2011. The current Year 11 are on track to achieve better still in 2013, particularly in mathematics. Improvements to teaching, additional classes, and extra tuition have already secured grade C or better outcomes in mathematics
- The academy enters some students for GCSE mathematics early, but then continues to teach them mathematics once they achieve the target C grade. This strategy has been effective in bringing up standards in mathematics to be similar to English. Students recognise the importance of improving their mathematical skills and eventually come to appreciate the hard work and effort required.
- Students' attainment on entry in Year 7 is broadly average, although there are fewer more-able students than in many schools. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are developed systematically across all subjects from Year 7 but both still require improvement. Teachers are consistently using the academy's literacy policy to help improve writing in all subjects, but the policy is still at an early stage of implementation. The reading recovery scheme aimed at low-attaining students has resulted in substantial gains in their reading skills, to bring them in line with age-related expectations. This is supported by the Year 7 catch up grant. Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium are attaining almost as well as other students, and significantly better than similar pupils nationally. This is because resources targeted at helping them are well used to provide individual support and tuition. The gap between their performance and other students is lower than is found nationally.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs are making good progress This is because of very well focused support, in-class intervention, and careful monitoring by academy leaders.
- In lessons, students achieve well when they have some opportunity to participate actively in their learning, for example through practical work, or group discussions, or a sense of competitive problem solving. Progress slows when students have to listen to extended explanations, or wait their turn to contribute to a whole-class discussion.
- Sixth form attendance, attainment, progress and retention on courses was inadequate in 2012, continuing a declining trend from the predecessor school. The academy senior staff, with local governors, have identified the primary reasons for this, and acted as quickly as possible to correct them. This has reversed the declining standards, with firm evidence of January 2013 examinations showing better attainment, and better retention on the majority of courses.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the work set in some lessons does not engage,

motivate or inspire the students. This is because the activities do not build on their prior knowledge well enough. Some activities are too hard or too easy and so do not challenge students well. Teachers have good information that should let them plan effectively to meet students' learning needs, but are not consistently doing so in every lesson.

- The best teaching quickly hooks students into the main idea of the lesson. After a brisk introduction, students get on with tasks promptly; these are often adjusted so that the level of difficulty reflects the abilities of each student. Students are quick to ask their own questions and debate each other's ideas with the teacher. In almost all lessons, there are good teacher-student relationships that contribute well to a culture of positive learning.
- In good lessons, teachers and other staff lead the students' learning but never do the work for them. But where teaching is weaker, students are over-directed, for example by worksheets that reduce the need for students to do any writing apart from short statements, and deny students a chance to design for themselves how they might set out their work. In practical sessions, sometimes too little time is allowed for students to practise and develop the manual skills needed. In some lessons, teachers are too anxious to move on to the next activity without giving all students an opportunity to reflect upon and fully understand the first task; that leads to gaps in learning and unfinished work in books.
- Marking of students' work varies too much in quality. There are good examples of marking, especially in the coursework assignments, where teachers have provided detailed suggestions for further improvement. As yet, most students are not responding to that advice, because it is sometimes too general, or there are no firm expectations from teachers to do so. In some of the routine classwork, however, marking is done by 'ticking' work at random and does not offer an accurate view on the quality of students' work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- While most students are eager to settle into work in lessons, some lose concentration and misbehave if the work set does not interest them. Many teachers deal with any sporadic inattention well, using a quiet word or skilful adjustment of the task, but others ignore it. In some instances, this can lead to steadily worsening behaviour and a confrontation that interrupts the learning of the whole class. Students are sometimes removed from the class for an incident that began with something very minor.
- Students and staff are aware of the negative impact of managing behaviour inconsistently. School records show these incidents are increasing, as are exclusions, although these are no higher than in most schools. Leaders expressed concern that a few teachers are relying too heavily on the 'response team' of senior staff who are on call to help with incidents. They have begun further training for staff to help them manage minor disruption in lessons more effectively.
- Most students surveyed by the academy, and the students spoken to by inspectors, say that they feel safe. They know how to report bullying, and who they can talk to, and are adamant there have been no homophobic or racist incidents to their knowledge. There are very few recorded incidents in the academy's records of any serious conflict between students. Students and parents are confident that the college does deal with bullying once it becomes evident.
- Attendance has slipped this year from broadly average in 2012 in the main school, and is also weak in the sixth form. The main reason is persistent poor attendance by a minority of students. Changes to the enforcement policy of the external attendance improvement service have led to a reduction in court orders. Academy leaders think this has removed a deterrent that previously

did encourage parents to support their child's attendance.

- The behaviour of students in school between lessons, and at breaks and lunchtimes is calm, well mannered and polite. Students are friendly towards one another, including their peers from Fair Oak, and welcoming to visitors. They are generous towards others in need in raising funds for charity. When given the opportunity, they work very well together in lessons, and this was a strong feature in affirming their good social and moral development.

The leadership and management are good

- In a short time, governors and senior staff have successfully achieved substantial improvements to student outcomes in comparison with the predecessor school. Changes to the range of subjects being taught so that it provides a better mix of academic and vocational courses have taken place as swiftly as possible. The effective collaboration with Fair Oak Academy, which includes exchanges of teachers and students between the sites, allows a wider range of subjects to be offered at Key Stage 4 for both academies. These changes have been expertly supported by officers from the Academies Trust, who bring considerable expertise and effective advice into the academy leadership team.
- Although achievement, teaching and behaviour are not yet good overall, they are improving quickly. Leaders, and their staff, know what is working well and what is needed to improve further. Leaders at all levels demonstrate a good capacity for improvement.
- The pupil premium funding provides support staff for tuition and one-to-one intervention, and allows smaller teaching groups in English and mathematics.
- Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding meet the statutory requirements.
- The 'Life and Soul' days are innovative and effective in helping students develop social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Teachers prepare thoroughly for these, and inspectors observed consistently good lessons delivering the well-planned programme.
- In the sixth form, until recently, there was a poor match of course to the students' learning needs and abilities, with weak on-site supervision and study support. Inspectors discovered a lack of clear identity as a sixth form. This is in part because of the 'part-time' nature of the contributing teachers from the separate 11-16 academies. The small numbers of students and a lack of on-site enrichment opportunities like clubs, sports, artistic and cultural activities limit the chances of developing a strong identity with the sixth form. The sixth form subjects on offer are changing to predominantly Advanced GCE courses and admission requirements have been raised in terms of GCSE grades required. The site will close this term, bringing provision to Hagley Park, under the continuous supervision of the academy staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has quickly identified the areas for rapid improvement including the sixth form and the 11-16 range of subjects being studied and is taking effective action to resolve these concerns.
 - It scrutinises and evaluates students' performance data and records of the quality of teaching regularly, and questions school leaders on strengths and weaknesses that these data reveal. Governors use external consultants as independent assessors of this data, including as an independent check on the accuracy of school leaders' judgements of teaching quality.
 - It monitors the performance of students and staff accurately and, therefore, directs resources quickly to meet emerging needs, for example, through using the pupil premium to set up

additional classes, and individual tuition, in mathematics.

- It links the progression of teachers' salary up the pay scales to teachers' classroom performance and the outcomes of their students.

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	137103
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399855

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Maintained
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	703
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Murphy
Headteacher	David Powell (Executive Principal) and Michael Astley (headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01889 571680
Fax number	01889 571681
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