

Hardenhuish School

Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6RJ

Inspection dates 30 April – 1 May 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.

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body have a clear vision for the school and high ambitions for the students.
- They have implemented effective initiatives to improve the quality of teaching which are already having a positive impact on students' learning.
- The percentage of students achieving five or more grade A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has been consistently above average over the past few years.
- In the best teaching, teachers plan lessons that enable students to become actively engaged in their learning, encouraging high levels of independence and challenge.
- The sixth form is good. It offers a wide range of courses, and attainment results at AS Level and A level have been consistently above average.
- Students' behaviour, both in lessons and around the large school site, is good and students feel safe. Staff and students treat each other with respect and are proud of their school community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Progress for a very small number of students, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, is below average.
- Leaders have not always checked the progress of these students closely enough to identify what support is needed, or to measure the impact of any support that is given.
- Some activities for less-able students are either too challenging or not sufficiently interesting to engage them and make sure that they make rapid progress in their learning.
- Marking does not always show students how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 45 lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 298 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires from 116 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and students' assessment information, as well as examples of students' work.
- They held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ian Bryant	Additional Inspector
Teresa Gilpin	Additional Inspector
Linda Peck	Additional Inspector
Roger Thurlbeck	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hardenhuish School is a larger-than-average academy.
- Hardenhuish School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2010. When its predecessor school, Hardenhuish Secondary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A very small number of sixth form students attend collaborative provision at Sheldon Secondary School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly for less-able students, by:
 - making sure that teachers use available information regarding students' prior ability to plan appropriately challenging and interesting lessons
 - ensuring that marking consistently and clearly shows students what they need to do to improve their work.
- Continue to close gaps in attainment between different groups of students, especially those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, so that all make rapid progress, by:
 - closely monitoring the progress of different groups of students and giving appropriate and specific early support as required
 - checking the impact of this support on students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry is above average. By the time students leave school, at the end of Year 11, the proportion of students achieving five or more grade A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is much higher than average.
- The proportion of students making three or more levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in English has fluctuated over recent years. Current performance data and students' work show that the current rate of progress is good.
- The proportion of students making three or more levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in mathematics has been consistently above average and this looks set to continue.
- The school does not routinely enter students early for GCSE. The vast majority of students were entered for GCSE mathematics during the summer of Year 11. This had a positive impact on attainment with the percentage of students achieving each grade being above average.
- Attainment in two thirds of subjects at GCSE grades A* to C is above average. In 2012, students did particularly well in computer studies, French and religious education.
- The progress of the very small number of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is checked carefully and over the past couple of years has been above average in mathematics. In English, progress was above average in 2011 but below average in 2012. As a result, the school has carried out a range of targeted literacy strategies and analysis of current progress suggests students are making good progress in English.
- Over time, the gap in attainment between the small group of students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers has reduced significantly. However, there is a grade difference between this group and that of their peers in English and mathematics. Leaders are using the pupil premium to provide targeted in-class support using learning support assistants, smaller classes in English and mathematics and extra provision such as a breakfast club. Leaders are beginning to track the impact these interventions are having on student attainment and progress, but this work is at an early stage.
- Over time, attainment has been much higher than average at AS and A level in the sixth form, while progress is good. For some of their courses, a minority of sixth form students attend the neighbouring secondary school and some of their sixth form students attend courses at Hardenhuish. This has allowed a greater number of courses to be offered to Hardenhuish students. The head of sixth form monitors the quality of provision provided by the other school and acts as a link. Teachers on both sites share information regarding the progress of individual students to make sure that they make good progress.
- The school is implementing a range of strategies to improve and promote reading, writing and communication skills across the key stages. The well-resourced and busy library is used by both staff and students and there is a range of high-profile events to enthuse and engage students in reading. Equally, the senior leadership team has carried out a drive to improve literacy across the curriculum and this is already having an impact on students' learning and the quality of written and spoken communication.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View were pleased with the progress made by their children.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the best teaching, teachers use their subject knowledge to plan engaging activities, focused on building on students' prior knowledge and encouraging high levels of participation. There is a high level of appropriate challenge, effective questioning and the use of high-quality resources.
- Students are encouraged to work in groups, working together to solve problems or discuss issues. For instance, in a design and technology lesson, students devised appropriate questions in groups, created a marking scheme and discussed the complexity of the set questions and

model answers.

- In a French lesson, an engaging starter set the tone for a challenging series of activities that continually built on students' understanding of key vocabulary and encouraged them to use the language consistently throughout their pair/group discussions.
- While the majority of marking and feedback is of good quality, this is not consistent across all subjects and year groups. Some marking is too vague, relying on general comments about effort and presentation and with little guidance on how students can improve their work.
- Students are often encouraged to assess their own work or that of their classmates, indicating areas of strengths and weaknesses. When done well this is a productive activity.
- Some teaching is not pitched appropriately to the ability range of the students, particularly for the less able. Either the set work is too challenging for the students or the teacher relies too heavily on planning a series of unchallenging activities that lack pace and do not allow students to make progress. Often in these lessons, there are few opportunities for students to work at their own speed and they lose interest.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is at least good with much being outstanding. As a consequence, students are encouraged to opt for more traditional subjects such as mathematics and sciences and achieve results at AS and A level much higher than the national average.
- Parents, carers and students are positive about the quality of teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Students are respectful and courteous to each other and are polite and helpful.
- Students are proud of their school and were keen to share their very positive experiences with inspectors.
- Students are keen to work collaboratively in groups and listen carefully to the views of others. Any minor disruptions to learning are handled quietly and firmly by the teacher, using the school's behaviour code.
- The school has recently developed an on-site centre for a very small number of young people who need short-term alternative provision – The Key Centre. The impact of this resource can already be seen in the reduction of fixed-term exclusions this year and compelling, individual case studies.
- The team of pastoral managers is highly regarded by the students and monitors the behaviour log, intervening as and when appropriate. All eight are trained in 'restorative justice', where both sides are given the opportunity to have their say, and use it across the school with both staff and students.
- Students feel safe and can explain in detail issues around their own safety, particularly with regard to e-safety.
- Responses from Parent View indicate that the majority of parents and carers believe that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying and regularly explore the issues during lessons and assemblies. Students spoke of the school's 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying and were clear that any incidents are dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- Students are encouraged to celebrate differences through an extensive programme of citizenship, personal, social and health education and extra-curricular activities. This is planned carefully across each year group, as are visits to explore different cultures and faiths.
- Attendance is just below average. This is due to a number of specific reasons relating to a small number of students and is being monitored closely by the senior leadership team. Current evidence suggests that attendance should at least match if not exceed the previous year's. Students are punctual to lessons even though the site is very large.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well regarded by staff, students, parents, carers and the governing body. Her drive and ambition have been instrumental in leading the conversion to academy status and she is developing an effective senior leadership team.
 - The headteacher and other leaders in the school have worked hard to build positive relationships with parents and carers and local schools. This is reflected in the very positive staff questionnaires and responses on Parent View.
 - The headteacher holds teachers to account through robustly managing their performance. They have clear targets to improve that can be easily measured.
 - A formal, yearly lesson observation plan gives all teachers the opportunity to observe a colleague jointly, following a period of mentoring with either a member of the senior leadership team or from a neighbouring school. Teachers' responses to the training offered, both internal and external, have been very positive.
 - The sixth form is effectively led and as a result, continues to attract large numbers of students.
 - The leadership team tracks the progress of all groups of students, including those receiving pupil premium funding. However, it has not always monitored the impact early intervention and support have had on the learning of this group. A system to do so has been introduced and, though in its early stages, is having a significant impact on the progress and attainment of this group this year.
 - The leadership team works relentlessly to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.
 - The curriculum offers a range of courses, with options beginning in Year 9 to give students the opportunity to try out courses. Alongside more traditional GCSEs, there are four work-related courses. Post-16, the school is proud of the wide range of more traditional AS- and A-level qualifications it offers, which it believes contributes to over 70% of students every year moving on to good universities.
 - The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies and lessons is very good. There is a school parliament with elected representatives from each form, complete with committees and a cabinet. They are involved in some aspects of the school's decision-making process, have initiated developments such as the Green Flag Award and have been consulted over issues such as teaching and learning.
 - The school has links with schools in India and Rwanda, volunteering trips to Borneo and Ecuador and regular events encouraging students to reflect on modern Britain. A quarter of Year 13 students mentor younger students and many are involved in volunteering. A huge range of enrichment activities takes place each week and participation rates are high.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Communication between senior leaders and governors is good. The governing body is clear about its role in holding the school to account and its statutory duties relating to students' safety. Safeguarding requirements are met.
 - The governing body meets regularly with the senior leadership team and has a good understanding of the quality of teaching, the school's strengths and areas for development. Link governors meet with subject leaders to discuss progress and undertake lesson observations.
 - The governing body is aware of the performance of particular student groups and the emerging impact of pupil premium funding on students' achievement. The governing body works effectively with the headteacher to make sure that the teachers' performance is managed robustly. It knows what the school is doing to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance.
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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	136296
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	412239

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
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	1,596
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	303
Appropriate authority	Wiltshire
Chair	Andrew Holyoake
Headteacher	Jan Hatherell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01249 650693
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Email address	admin@hardenhuish.wilts.sch.uk

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