

The Holly Hall Academy

Scotts Green Close, Dudley, DY1 2DU

Inspection dates 8–9 May 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There are too many lessons where students' achievement is not good.
- Too few students achieve higher grades in English and mathematics.
- Not enough students have made the progress they are capable of in English and mathematics.
- Students who are supported through extra funding, and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their peers, but not enough students make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers' written comments do not always show how students need to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how well their students can achieve in lessons, and teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support the learning of individual students.
- Leaders do not check the quality of teaching often enough in order to identify what teachers need to do to improve.
- Information about how well students have achieved is not used routinely by governors, leaders and staff to identify where there are areas of underperformance in subjects and year groups.
- The subjects that students follow do not always take into account their interests. For example, students do not have a choice which language they study in Key Stage 3.

The school has the following strengths

- Students behave well around the school and in lessons. They are polite and courteous to their peers and to adults.
- Students are confident in speaking their opinions in large groups, and listen respectfully to the views of others.
- School leaders know the strengths and areas to develop of the school, and are effectively prioritising areas for improving students' achievement.
- Students' attendance is consistently above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, of which eight were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors made several other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work alongside a senior leader, and held meetings with groups of students and informal discussions with others.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three governors, and the school's senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at the school's documentation, including that relating to students' progress and attainment, safeguarding, attendance, and how teachers' performance is monitored.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, in addition to the school's information from parents. The responses from 62 staff to inspection questionnaires were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Bonner	Additional Inspector
Helen Owen	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Just over half the students are of White British heritage, and the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for specific groups of pupils; including those known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and those whose families are in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement is above the national average.
- A small proportion of students spend part of their week away from the school following alternative courses at a consortium managed Applied Learning Centre, local colleges of further education or other local schools.
- Holly Hall Academy became an academy in September 2011. When its predecessor school, Holly Hall Mathematics and Computing College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good throughout the school, so that students learn quickly and, as a result, make good progress in English and mathematics by:
 - making sure teachers use information about what their students have learned and understood before, so that learning activities are planned to challenge all students
 - ensuring teachers have consistently high expectations of what all their students can achieve
 - improving the quality of marking so that students know exactly what they need to do in order to improve their work
 - insisting that all students take pride in the presentation of their written work
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are always effectively used to help students learn quickly in lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that information about students' progress and attainment is analysed and shared with all key staff, including governors, so that they are all fully aware of where there is underperformance
 - thoroughly and consistently monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school, so that this information can be used to plan effective training opportunities for teachers
 - ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of all students, so that all students achieve well.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The proportion of students who left the school in 2012 with five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, was below the national average. Students currently in the school are on track to achieve better results in their GCSEs this year. However, last year, too few of the more-able students achieved grades B or above in their GCSE examinations.
- Not all students achieve as well as they are capable in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Some are capable of learning more quickly.
- Students supported through the pupil premium achieved half a grade less than their classmates in both English and mathematics in 2012.
- The school has allocated the pupil premium funding to provide additional resources, small group tuition, and extra staffing to accelerate the progress made by eligible students. In addition, funding that is allocated for Year 7 is spent on a specific group of students to develop literacy and numeracy skills, and as a result, these students are making good progress in comparison to their classmates.
- All students take GCSE mathematics in Year 10. They have the opportunity to retake examinations, although not enough students gained higher grades in 2012. As a result of this, the school has ensured that students who are in the current Year 11 receive extra tuition to help them achieve the higher grades when they retake their examination.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their peers, with better progress seen in mathematics than in English. They benefit from additional support and tuition, and close attention to their well-being from all staff.
- Some students spend time away from the school studying vocational courses. These courses are carefully selected to motivate and inspire students. All of them complete the courses and many go on to the next level of study when they leave the school. The school monitors closely the academic achievement and well-being of these students, to ensure they can achieve as highly as they can.
- School leaders have put into place actions that are resulting in students currently in the school making better progress in English and mathematics than in the past. However, this has not yet led to students leaving the school having achieved well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not led to students achieving well over time. There is some good teaching, but there is also some that requires improvement.
- Where teaching requires improvement, work set lacks challenge for the students, and can be uninspiring and does not build on what students already know and understand. Teachers do not show that they have high expectations of how quickly their students can learn. Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to help students learn rather than managing the behaviour of a very few students.

- Throughout the school, students do not receive helpful feedback on their written work, and are not clear on how to improve their work to reach the next level or grade. There are inconsistencies in how the books are marked, and students' presentation of their work is sometimes poor.
- Where teaching is good, students learn quickly, and benefit from teachers constantly checking that their students understand the key points of the lesson. Technology is used to good effect, for example, to explain the quality of work expected for each grade in Art. Homework is effective in consolidating and developing understanding. For example, the extended homework tasks set in Key Stage 3 engage and enthuse the students in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are polite, courteous to adults and their peers, and behave sensibly around the school site. They are welcoming and friendly to visitors.
- Students enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their attendance which is consistently above the national average.
- They feel safe in school, and know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including using the internet. They have a good awareness of the different types of bullying, and are confident in the school addressing this on the few occasions it happens.
- They enjoy the opportunities that the school provides to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, the tutorial programme offers opportunities to discuss a wide range of issues.
- In lessons, students are keen to learn. They listen closely to others' opinions, and are confident in expressing their own views in whole class situations.
- Students enjoy their responsibilities within the school. For example, the head boy and head girl attend governing body meetings to contribute to discussions from the students' perspective.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors have willingly taken on extra responsibilities this academic year during the Principal's extended leave of absence. The acting Principal and the senior leadership team have quickly identified the strengths of the school, and effectively prioritised the areas requiring improvement. Although this is bringing some improvements in how well students are doing, these are not enough to ensure good achievement.
 - The quality of teaching has not been monitored closely enough in the past, and performance management targets have not been linked closely enough to students' progress. Issues arising from lesson observations have not been used effectively to inform training for staff to constantly improve the quality of teaching. The leadership team are now developing a robust system to monitor teachers' performance, and to ensure that pay rises are linked closely to student performance.
 - Leaders in the school are aware of where the school needs to improve, and are keen to improve students' achievement. Middle leaders are now being held more accountable for results in their
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subject areas than in the past, and they enjoy working closely with senior leaders in order to plan what steps need to be taken to help students improve further.

- School leaders track student progress and attainment, but this information is not always analysed carefully enough and then shared with key staff so that all leaders are aware of where there is underperformance and areas of strength.
- The curriculum has not met the needs of some students in the past. For example, some students have not made the progress in English that they could have because what they have been taught has not engaged all students in their learning. In other subjects, such as modern foreign languages, the curriculum in Key Stage 3 has not taken into account the previous language learning of students.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They have helped plan how it should develop since becoming a new academy and increasingly so during this academic year. They have not always had the detail that they need in order to know where there are areas of underperformance. They have set up a working group which meets regularly to review the information they need to plan, especially to raise attainment. They carefully review whether pay rises for staff are appropriate and are actively involved in managing the performance of teachers. The pupil premium is carefully allocated so that eligible students benefit. They ensure financial stability and ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met.

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	137390
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	412826

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	704
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Price
Headteacher	Graham Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01384 253722
Fax number	01384 456705
Email address	slloyd-ppa@hollyhall.dudley.sch.uk

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