

The Henry Box School

Church Green, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 4AX

Inspection dates 25–26 June 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.

- Teaching is mainly very engaging and good or outstanding and that is why students' progress is rapidly improving.
- Higher-ability students achieve better than similar students nationally.
- Middle-ability students in English and lower-ability students in mathematics have shown rapid improvement during the academy's first year.
- Students, including some supported by the pupil premium, in Years 7 to 9 who have difficulties with literacy, and sometimes with behaviour, improve very well through specialist teaching.
- Students' behaviour is good and they feel safe at school.
- Senior and middle leaders are very effective in managing the improvement of teaching.
- The sixth form is well led. It provides a good range of academic courses that are taught well.
- The governing body is very well organised and has instigated a long-term plan for the development of the school. It requires senior leaders to produce an annual plan with clear measures of improvement so that it can challenge any shortcomings.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in a small proportion of lessons does not match the quality of the best lessons.
- Students do not always take enough responsibility for their learning or challenge themselves enough.
- Students make less progress in drama, music and Latin than they do in other subjects.
- Attendance is reduced by some families taking holidays in term time.
- A few students in Years 10 and 11 do not engage fully enough with learning in school.
- Students who enter sixth form with lower grades at GCSE do not progress as well as others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 40 lessons, four of them jointly with senior leaders.
- They asked some students to read aloud and discussed their reading habits.
- They scrutinised students' work and the quality of marking in students' books.
- A selection of small group and individual learning support sessions were visited.
- Inspectors met with staff, representative groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- They took account of the 124 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 80 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team looked at selection of school documentation, including information about safeguarding, information on the progress and attainment of students, the school's checks on how well it is doing and records of lesson observations, students' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Anthony Byrne Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rob Isaac

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Michael Lafford

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Jim McVeigh

Additional Inspector

Karen Roche

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Full report

Information about this school

- The Henry Box School is much larger than the average-size secondary school.
- About four-fifths of students are White British. The proportion from other ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families, is lower than average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is well below average at school action level and the proportion at school action plus or who have a statement is lower than average. The most commonly identified needs relate to specific learning difficulties or behavioural difficulties.
- Some students in Year 11 attend alternative provision at a local college of further education or work experience for part of their curriculum.
- The Henry Box School converted to become an academy on 1 June 2012. When its predecessor school, also known as The Henry Box School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be a good school overall.
- In its first set of results since converting into an academy the school met the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- During the inspection Years 13 and 11 had left the school, having completed their courses. Two Year 7 tutor groups were away on a residential trip.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Secure consistently outstanding achievement in all subjects for all groups of pupils in the following ways:

- In teaching:
 - reduce variation in the quality of teaching between subjects through observation of lessons and feedback, followed up by opportunities for teachers to visit lessons where outstanding teaching regularly takes place.
 - ensure students are given a very active and engaging role in lessons.
 - make sure students challenge themselves to play a very active part in lessons and to respond fully to marking.
 - extend the very effective support programmes for literacy and behaviour to Years 10 and 11 so the small group of "hard to reach" students remains fully engaged with the curriculum.
- Work with parents to improve attendance, especially by reducing days lost by taking holidays in term time. Improve the overall achievement of students in the sixth form by ensuring that those who enter with lower grades at GCSE receive extra support before their progress starts to fall behind others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with average standards in literacy and numeracy. In the new academy they have made good progress this year. In lessons and subjects they are mainly working at above-average standards, as reflected in the school's accurate recording of their progress.
- Higher-ability students achieve better than their similar national group. As the academy opened middle-ability students in Year 11 achieved below average results in English GCSE. Results in mathematics were average overall because lower-ability students did not achieve well. Students at all ability levels, including students from ethnic minority groups and those speaking English as an additional language, have made good progress because of improvements to the quality of teaching in the subjects. English lessons have focussed very clearly on steps students have to take to improve their understanding and accurate use of language and provide students with very close marking and advice about how to improve. Reduced class sizes and practical approaches are helping lower-ability students improve in mathematics. After a mathematics lesson involving dance steps a student remarked, "I had so much fun!"
- The academy's first set of GCSE results showed some variation in securing the best progress. Subjects with above average results, such as geography and modern foreign languages continue to motivate students to achieve well. In the few subjects that had results below average, such as drama, music and Latin, students' work is now improving.
- Analysis of results revealed a gap in achievement equivalent to a full grade or more below others at GCSE for pupils supported by the pupil premium and some who have special educational needs related to literacy and, in some cases, behaviour too. Early identification of such pupils, intensive teaching of literacy in very small groups, support with emotional difficulties and generally working in small "booster" classes in most subjects is greatly improving progress in Years 7 to 9. When the group in Year 7 were re-tested in reading, six extra months of progress had been made on average. Other students who are disabled or have other special educational needs make good progress.
- In Years 10 and 11 students who have behavioural difficulties, identified by the school as a small, "hard to reach" group, have not had time to benefit from this early intervention. The school responds to their difficulty in succeeding in academic work by providing one-to-one mentoring and some alternative experiences aimed at helping them gain employment.
- A good proportion of students continues into the sixth form which also attracts about a third of its entry from other schools. Outcomes are good in terms of progressing to higher education or employment. In the first set of results English Literature was well above national points score and geography, business studies and critical thinking all had above average point scores at AS level. The supporting notes prepared for a forthcoming exhibition of art showed students' intellectual ability to explore the themes that inspired their highly accomplished work. Students beginning courses with lower grades than others do not make such good progress as the majority, particularly during Year 12 AS courses and this limits overall achievement to good.

The quality of teaching is good

- The inspection confirmed the accuracy of the school's own checks through lesson observations: teaching is mainly good or outstanding and that is why progress is rapidly improving. Teaching seen in sixth form lessons was consistently good or better.
- Students made the most progress in the lessons that required them to participate very actively and to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers are highly aware of the importance of developing literacy so they check that topics and instructions are clear to students. Tasks interest students. It was commonly seen in lessons that teachers had high expectations of what students could do and circulated and intervened judiciously without interrupting others; just reminding students now and then about keeping up pace to meet deadlines. In one observed

lesson the teacher skilfully involved students in building on points made by others so that their insight deepened. By the end the teacher summed up how much progress had been made, levels reached and students took pride in what had been achieved.

- Examples of such teaching that demanded very high involvement on the part of students were often seen. Year 8 high-ability intensively debated the benefits the British Empire brought about. Year 10 mixed-ability taught each other what they had learned about aspects of rivers and coasts. Year 9 lower-ability were fascinated in a lesson that enabled them to analyse famous speeches and the impact they had.
- Assessment is used well to pitch the challenge appropriately in most lessons and guidance on gaining marks in exams is strong, particularly in English. Increasingly students are expected to make a response that demonstrates they have understood guidance given in marking.
- While the quality of teaching is often high, there are a few lessons in which the content and tasks do not interest or engage students sufficiently and the pace of learning is slow. At such times the behaviour of a few students preoccupies the teacher and others do not get enough attention and support, though they get on quietly with the work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students enjoy good relationships with each other and their teachers. They feel safe at school and say that nothing worries them to prevent them learning. They respond well to the way teaching is developing in the school, but the best teaching has not yet fully influenced some students' expectations of themselves as learners. Middle-ability students can tend to be more passive and do not always challenge themselves to answer or reach the highest level in their work, or to engage in wider reading and research that will support their learning.
- Students have been taught about all forms of bullying. They view it as morally wrong. They feel safe from it because it is rare and they are confident friends and adults would support them if it occurred. Students' confidence was reflected in parents' views as recorded on-line, where it was not registered by the majority as a concern.
- There is a declining trend in exclusions. Strategies to support students with behavioural needs are effective. Younger students are enabled to fully access the curriculum through literacy support and counselling. A few older students have a reduced timetable to allow access to part-time courses at a college in town or extended work experience. Their behaviour and attendance is improving.
- The attendance of pupils supported by the pupil premium and at school action plus has improved over the year. Families taking holidays during term time contributes significantly to attendance being a little below average.
- The very pleasant school site is treated with respect, with very little littering and no vandalism.
- Sixth formers provide good leadership and role models for younger students through the house system, sport and helping in lessons. Their attendance in lessons or in private study is recorded and for safety at other times a signing in and out book is maintained.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, well supported by middle management, have got the academy off to a good start. Very rapid recovery from a disappointing result in GCSE English (strongly led and supported within the department) and the highly successful raising of achievement in literacy together with improvements in behaviour in Years 7 to 9 have demonstrated strong capacity to improve.
- The sixth form is well led in terms of high expectations, range of subjects and support for students.
- Improving teaching towards being consistently outstanding has been a major priority. Lesson observations are accurate in judging quality. Development is supported by clear models for

improvement in discussions and demonstration lessons. An effective element of lesson observation includes consideration of how much progress students have made over time since the previous observation, rather than focusing solely on the teaching seen.

- In performance management it is established governors will only approve progression in salary if improvements in progress justify the reward.
- Staff questionnaires were in the main positive about how the school is improving, though some expressed reservations about the consistency of expectations about behaviour and learning.
- Information on students' progress is very well maintained and used, including by heads of department and tutors, although about a fifth of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt they did not receive enough information about progress.
- The school has made very good use of increased funding through the pupil premium to improve equal opportunity for younger pupils who have fallen behind because of behaviour and literacy difficulties. A fine example of partnership working with parents is the invitation to families to visit the dedicated centre where support work takes place to discuss their child's needs, gain a picture of what to expect in terms of help and learn how they can contribute.
- The school manages the welfare of students with care and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- Senior leaders required departments to audit their contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. What emerged shows development is good in all respects. The heritage of values associated with the historic site of the school is being well maintained in the curriculum, sport and music and by experiences of field trips and success in national competitions.
- About four-fifths of parents responding felt the school is well led and managed and the inspection team agrees with that. The Local Authority was contacted during the inspection, but was unable to provide an officer in a position to express a view.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well organised and conducts its business efficiently and effectively. This was demonstrated recently in succession planning and new appointments to senior leadership. It employs a part-time clerk as support because it believes independence from school management empowers it to take an impartial, objective view. Governors have worked to develop a ten-year plan for the school and hold senior managers to account for delivering on challenging year-by-year performance indicators. They have undertaken training in interpreting data and scrutinise information on progress. This has enabled them to measure the use and impact of pupil premium funding. Their financial responsibilities are discharged well, including approving progression in staff salaries based on meeting student progress targets in performance management.

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	138210
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	412816

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Converter 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	1270
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Bradley
Headteacher	Nicola Edmondson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01993703955
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