

Lady Hawkins' High School

Park View, Kington, HR5 3AR

Inspection dates 24–25 September 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.

- Students do not make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- GCSE results are not good enough in geography and history and not enough more-able students get the top grades in science.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Achievement across subjects is too variable.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not always make use of what they know about students' prior learning to plan work at the correct level.
- Marking is inconsistent and not all teachers use questions effectively in their lessons.
- Subject leadership in a small number of subjects is not sharp enough to bring about the rapid improvements that are needed in teaching and students' achievement.
- Leaders' checking of the quality of teaching is not always as regular or as effective as it should be.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress is good in mathematics, and GCSE results are above the national average.
- English GCSE results shifted from below the national average in 2012 to slightly above in 2013 and were very good in English literature.
- Behaviour is good. Students know how to keep themselves safe.
- For a small school, the range of subjects, including vocational courses on offer to students, is impressive.
- Students enjoy a wide range of sporting and outdoor activities. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The headteacher has taken action that has improved teaching and raised achievement in English this year.
- Attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 20 different teachers. Eight of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors carried out a work scrutiny during these lesson observations in English, mathematics and science. The lead inspector also went on a 'learning walk' with a senior leader to observe students engagement with learning in lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body in his role as a trustee.
- The inspectors looked at assessment information, the school's systems for tracking students' progress, its vision statement, the school improvement plan, the school's monitoring of teaching and learning file, a wide range of policies including the appraisal policy and safeguarding policies and governing body documentation.
- Inspectors examined 29 Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff.
- There were 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. These views were taken into account by inspectors. Inspectors also took into account letters sent to them by parents.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Martin Spoor	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lady Hawkins' High School became an academy in November 2011. When its predecessor school, Lady Hawkins' High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The number of students attending the school is falling due to population changes in the rural area it serves. Governors and the headteacher have had to manage a redundancy programme over the past two years because of the fall in numbers.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are above average.
- A below-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school makes use of alternative off-site provision. A range of venues are used such as Hereford College of Technology and the Hair Academy in Hereford. Students follow a range of vocational courses, such as motor vehicle and hair and beauty.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, across all subjects, but particularly in geography, history, science and in the sixth form, so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use their assessments of students' skills and previous learning more effectively to plan work that is set at the right level for students of different abilities, particularly the most able
 - use probing questions to check students' understanding of what they learn in lessons and move them on to new learning
 - give students clear feedback about what they need to do to improve, allow them the time to respond and ensure that they act on the advice they are given.
- Improve subject leadership, particularly in science, geography and history, by:
 - training all senior leaders so that they are equipped with the skills required to observe lessons and provide teachers with robust feedback on their performance
 - providing well-planned opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in their subjects in this and other schools
 - ensuring that subject leaders' guidance to teachers on their performance takes full account of how well they are raising students' achievement
 - ensuring that there is no slippage in the agreed planned timetable of lesson observations in any subject.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Despite the very significant improvement in the GCSE English language results in 2013 compared with 2012, some less-able students did not attain as well they needed to have done at GCSE. Over time, the progress of less-able students has lagged behind that of their peers.
- In a few English and science lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3, a minority of students make insufficient progress because teaching is not precise enough and activities are not consistently pitched at a level appropriate to their abilities. Students do not make enough progress in geography and history, and GCSE results in these subjects require improvement. Not enough of the school's most able students gain A* to A grades at GCSE in biology, chemistry and physics.
- Results in the sixth form are uneven, with students generally gaining less good results in many of the same subjects as they did at GCSE. However, sixth form students make good progress in some recently introduced vocational courses. For example, they achieve well in BTEC business studies.
- The school has, however, seen significant improvement in some areas this year and has a number of notable strengths in key areas. GCSE results at A* to C in English language were slightly above the national average in 2013. Significantly more students made at least expected progress compared to 2012. The achievement gap that existed between boys and girls the previous year narrowed. Passes at GCSE in English literature have been above the national average for two years. Students make good progress in mathematics, and GCSE results in this subject are above the national average.
- Progress is good in physical education lessons and students enjoy the many sporting activities provided for them.
- In 2012, students eligible for pupil premium funding were over a grade behind their peers in English and almost a grade behind in mathematics. The inspection took place too early in the academic year of 2013 to report conclusively on the impact of this funding last year because some of the outcomes of re-marks were still being returned during the inspection. However, the school targeted this funding more effectively in 2013 by using it to provide focused mentoring support for students and resourcing personalised programmes of study, and there is evidence, from the results that are in, that eligible students' achievement has improved.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Students disaffected by learning in a classroom environment have access to alternative programmes, often including off-site vocational subjects. Mostly, these students re-engage with learning because they see the relevance to employment of skills they develop. Consequently, their achievement is improving.
- Minority ethnic students do well and are often among the highest achieving students in the school.
- The school operates a selected policy of early entry in GCSE for its most able students in modern foreign languages, for example Polish and French, and also music. These students perform well.
- Attainment on entry in Year 7 is broadly average. The school has used its 'catch-up funding' effectively to narrow any gaps in attainment. Year 8 students, who on entry to the school in Year 7 were a little behind their peers in English and mathematics, have mostly caught up.

Overall, they now read and write and can do calculations to much the same standard as their peers.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school, particularly in science, history and geography. This is because, occasionally, teachers' planning is weak and does not take sufficient account of students' different abilities and needs. Despite the improvements introduced by senior leaders, a few teachers still do not make enough use of the knowledge they have of students' prior learning to set them work at the correct level in order to move them quickly on to new learning.
- In English, teaching is improving rapidly; individual lessons are frequently imaginative and exciting, and students respond enthusiastically. However, teaching in sets for lower attaining students is less well planned or effective in motivating students and ensuring that they make sufficient progress. Here, both teaching, and the support given by teaching assistants, requires further improvement.
- The teaching of science is too variable. In some lessons, students are quickly given challenging problems to solve, as seen in a lesson on the action of a diode. In others, however, teaching is led from the front for too long so that students lose concentration and fail to progress as they should. Occasionally, teachers do not check that all students have, as one student put it, 'got what they are talking about'.
- Teaching in the sixth form similarly varies from subject to subject. It shows much the same pattern of strengths and weaknesses as that seen lower down the school.
- Typically, in the weaker lessons, teachers do not use questions effectively to deepen students' understanding of what they are being taught. Teachers sometimes take far too long explaining to students what it is they need to learn. This slows the pace of students' learning.
- Marking is not consistently informative. Not all teachers mark students' books in such a way that they know what they must do to 'notch their work up a gear'.
- Although teaching is not yet good in all lessons, across the school as a whole it is improving. Occasionally, it is outstanding, particularly where teachers have responded well to the training put in place for them. There are pockets of inspirational teaching in the school; for example, in mathematics, physical education and English literature.
- In one excellent Year 10 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher used his outstanding subject knowledge and understanding of what each student in the room needed to learn to ensure that they all made outstanding progress in their work on multiplication of brackets. Students also really enjoyed the lesson saying, 'Maths is great.'
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants and grow in confidence. The teaching of students in alternative provision is also good. Teachers know their subjects well and are skilled in 'putting them across' in a practical and 'hands-on' manner. Here, students generally concentrate well because they enjoy the less formal atmosphere and know that they are learning skills that will support them in later life.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students show very positive attitudes to learning. They engage enthusiastically with interesting activities and enjoy working collaboratively to solve problems in lessons.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and throughout the school at break and lunch times. The school is calm and orderly. Students take great care of the inspirational school gardens. There is not a scrap of litter to be found. There have been no permanent exclusions over the past two years and very few fixed-term exclusions.
- Students say that they feel safe at school and they can talk about anything that troubles them with a trusted adult. They have a good understanding of cyber and prejudiced forms of bullying. Students say that bullying is not an issue in school.
- Students are adept at keeping safe. They are skilled in carrying out risk assessments; for example, before going mountain climbing. They know the risks of 'taking a dip' in a lake on a warm summer day; and they understand the importance of wearing protective clothing in work-place settings.
- Students understand the risks of getting involved in a gang and of substance misuse. They have a secure grasp and understanding of the harmful effects of unsafe sex. However, their understanding of the dangers associated with getting involved with fanatical religious or political groups is less secure.
- Attendance is above the national average reflecting students' enjoyment of school.
- Only very occasionally, in lessons where the teacher fails to capture their interest, does students' concentration wane.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite the many improvements the headteacher has brought to teaching and achievement, leadership still requires improvement because teaching is not consistently good in all subjects. Although many teachers have responded to the good-quality training provided for them and improved their teaching, a few have not done so sufficiently and their teaching remains weak.
- Subject leadership is uneven in quality. Although good in English and mathematics, not all senior and subject leaders have the skills to check the quality of teaching accurately and their feedback to teachers on how to improve their practice is not always robust. In geography, history and science, leaders are insufficiently clear about how to implement the school's vision, raise achievement and drive up standards in the subjects for which they have responsibility.
- Leadership in the sixth form also needs improvement. This is because, as in the main school, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching and the leadership of sixth form subjects.
- Overall, communication and work with parents is good. Some parents report that a few staff do not have high enough aspirations for their children. There is a commitment on the part of most teachers to ensure that all students have equal chances to succeed but a few teachers have not yet fully embraced the vision of a high level of challenge at all times. That means that some groups of students do not have the same opportunities to succeed as others.

- The range of vocational courses offered by the school is excellent and the school has worked hard to expand the opportunities it gives those students who stay on after GCSE. Students have access to good independent advice about what subjects to take, how to choose courses at college or at university, and good careers advice. The retention rate on courses in the sixth form is excellent. The school prepares students well for the next stage of their education and for life.
- Students' learning is enhanced by residential trips and a range of clubs. These, together with an extensive range of vocational options, enterprise projects, learning outdoors, relevant work-experience and opportunities to participate in sport at county level, motivate students and ensure that they enjoy their experience of school.
- Students are encouraged to reflect deeply when they visit the battlefields where the Second World War was fought; at Auschwitz; and when they discuss children far worse off than themselves at school council and decide to raise funds to help them. Students' awareness of cultural diversity is raised through links with a school in Uganda, and in religious education lessons. All staff tackle any form of discrimination rigorously.
- The headteacher has a clear strategy for developing the skills of staff at all levels. The school has drawn up a detailed strategic staffing plan to promote the academy's vision and to ensure it enjoys more confident and consistent leadership in the future at all levels. Individual teachers are being trained in subject leadership roles so that they can be strong contenders for such posts within the school whenever vacancies occur.
- A positive and constructive relationship has been maintained with the local authority. Support from the local authority is very light touch but the academy finds it nonetheless useful.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - As trustees, the governors provide valuable support to the academy. Governors receive information about students' progress and how it compares with other schools in a clear way that they understand, and they are beginning to ask staff challenging questions. They recognise that this is a work in progress and that their challenge to the school has not been as robust in the past as it should have been. However, they are now beginning to hold staff at all levels to account for students' achievement. Governors now ensure that the school allocates pupil premium and 'catch-up' funding appropriately and that the school's budget is monitored tightly. Governors are allocated to specific subjects and visit the school regularly. Although highly skilled, they keep up to date with training. Governors are involved in the school's self-evaluation and in the planning for improvement. There is a staff succession plan. Governors make sure that a policy links teachers' performance to pay, based on how effectively teachers promote students' learning. The headteacher's performance is reviewed in accordance with regulations. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are 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	137608
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	427143

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	376
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Grist
Headteacher	Gary House
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01544 230441
Fax number	01544 230978
Email address	enquiries@lhs.hereford.sch.uk

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