

Pool Hayes Arts and Community School

Castle Drive, Willenhall, WV12 4QZ

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In English and mathematics too few students make the progress they are capable of by the end of Year 11.
- Students' achievement is too variable between subjects and between groups of students. Boys achieve less well than girls and students known to be eligible for free school meals make less progress than their peers.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not consistently good. Teachers do not always plan activities that meet the needs of every student in their classes.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the progress of its students is not good enough.
- When not well supervised, the behaviour of some students shows a lack of respect for the school environment.
- School leaders monitor students' attainment but do not use information about students' progress systematically to check that they are all making enough progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is improving rapidly and is now about average.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in some parts of the school; this good practice is now being shared among all staff.
- Students with specific communication difficulties make good progress.
- In lessons students cooperate well with their teachers; there is little disruption.
- The school provides a wide range of courses that meet the needs of all its students.
- The school's governors are effective and play their part in improving the school.
- The school's leaders work well with the families of its students and are committed to supporting the local community.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with a member of the school’s leadership team. Inspectors visited an assembly, tutor groups and other learning activities. They also observed areas around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students, talked with students around the school and scrutinised samples of students’ work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other leaders, two members of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including the school’s records of current students’ progress, self-evaluation summaries and improvement plans, behaviour and attendance logs, minutes of governors’ meetings, records relating to safeguarding and those relating to the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors took account of the questionnaire completed by 63 staff, together with 56 responses submitted to the on-line questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Valerie Fehners	Additional Inspector
Steven Goldsmith	Additional Inspector
Glenn Mayoh	Additional Inspector
Joe Skivington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. Few students are of minority ethnic heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school hosts a specialist resource base for ten students who display autistic spectrum disorders.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, students from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all these students are those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at Walsall College to follow work-related courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that the features of good teaching present in the school, relating to pace, challenge and questioning, are implemented fully by all teachers
 - fully developing strategies to improve literacy so that students can successfully access their work in all subjects
 - making sure that students' work is marked frequently by all teachers, that it provides them with advice on how to improve and time to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Improve students' achievement by making sure that:
 - all groups of students, including boys and those known to be eligible for free school meals, make at least good progress in English and mathematics and that they make equally strong progress in all their subjects
 - students in the sixth form make more rapid and consistent progress.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring that all areas in and around the school are well supervised during lunchtime so that students show respect for the school environment and do not carelessly dispose of litter.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on raising standards by improving the ways they check the quality of teaching and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students do not make enough progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. The rates of progress vary between groups of students with only those students of average ability making enough progress.
- Students join the school with average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 11 the standards that they achieve are now broadly average so that the school has not accelerated their progress.
- The standards achieved vary greatly between subjects: achievement is good in subjects such as drama, music, sciences and sports-studies but poor in subjects such as history and art.
- The sixth form does not add enough value to students' achievement, and here too there are significant differences between the progress that students make in different subjects. However, attainment is improving and students who follow work-related courses are making good progress.
- After a dip in 2012 the school has returned to an upward path in students' attainment. There has been a large increase in the number of students achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics and this figure is now almost equal to the national average. Other achievement measures, including the number of students gaining a grade C or above in English and rates of progress in English, have also improved substantially since 2012.
- There is a large difference between the achievement of boys and girls, for example the proportion of boys achieving five or more higher GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is much less than the proportion of girls.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is increasing and they are now making similar rates of progress to their peers.
- Students who display autistic spectrum disorders make good progress in their communication skills, and rates of progress in English are equal to that of their peers. This enables them to gain worthwhile external qualifications at the end of Year 11.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium do not make as much progress in English and mathematics as other students. In 2012 the gap in attainment between these students and others in both English and mathematics was approximately one GCSE grade. The school's data show that the rate of progress of these students is increasing so that the gap in overall performance is now reducing.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is being used to provide small-group interventions and support for students who did not attain Level 4 in English by the end of Year 6 so that these students are making strong progress in their English and mathematics.
- The school makes use of early entry for its students in mathematics. There is evidence that this is depressing the achievement of higher ability students and the policy is now under review.
- The small number of students who attend Walsall College for part of their week make good progress in their well-chosen courses.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it is not consistently good enough across the school to ensure that all students make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- School leaders have increased the school's focus on improving the quality of teaching but the strategies introduced are not being demonstrated consistently so that they have not yet shown enough impact. For example, although the quality of probing questioning has been an area for whole-school improvement it is not yet of consistently high quality in English, mathematics and some other subjects.
- In better lessons teachers provide a variety of engaging activities for their students, ensure a rapid pace and probe understanding with skilful questioning. For example, in a Year 10 French lesson all students responded well to lively and well-planned teaching that built on their previous

learning, so that all made outstanding progress.

- In some lessons, little consideration of the students' prior understanding or skills is taken into account so that the work is not challenging for all students and all complete the same set activity, which limits the opportunities for able students. Similarly, in these lessons enough support is not provided for less able students.
- Some sixth form students benefit from good teaching that encourages them to express their views and is well planned to match their abilities. In a Year 13 chemistry lesson, for example, the teacher ensured that pace and questioning were well used when developing students' understanding of a complex topic. In other sixth form lessons, expectations are too low.
- Students with autistic spectrum disorders benefit from good teaching, using well-planned strategies in small groups. They are supported well by dedicated teaching assistants when in mainstream classes.
- The quality of marking and feedback varies between subjects and teachers. Examples of good marking were seen that clearly identifies what students have done well and what they need to do to improve, and then gives students the opportunities to make these improvements. This good practice, however, was not widespread.
- The school has correctly identified that levels of reading, writing, speaking and listening need to improve across all subjects and has begun to address this, for example by introducing a reading recovery scheme. There is a need to increase the focus on literacy in Years 7 to 9 in order to enable students to succeed with their examination courses further up the school.
- The school is using several strategies to share the good practice in teaching evident in the school. This sharing of good practice has not yet led to enough whole-school improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour around most parts of the school is good because students are well supervised. At lunchtimes, in parts of the school where there is less adult supervision, behaviour is variable and some students show little respect for the school, for example by carelessly disposing of large amounts of litter.
- There is little disruption in lessons and, when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Students' attitudes towards their learning are variable; in some lessons they show great enthusiasm but in others they make little positive contribution.
- More vulnerable students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well integrated with their peers. They socialise and study with other students.
- The behaviour of students with autistic spectrum disorders is managed well by their specialist teachers and by their teaching assistants.
- The number of exclusions is falling and the school's behaviour logs also show that the frequency of serious incidents is decreasing. These improvements are a result of the school's concerted drive to improve students' behaviour.
- Students feel safe in school and the curriculum supports them in learning how to stay safe. They have a good understanding of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites.
- Students report that incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying, are very rare and are dealt with swiftly.
- Members of the school council have been active in providing the school's leaders with students' views and this has led to improvements in facilities and in behaviour.
- Attendance is below average but is increasing because of the measures that the school is taking.
- The school checks that students attending off-site provision attend regularly and that there are no concerns with their welfare.
- Almost all parents and carers who expressed a view considered that behaviour is managed well. They also said that their child is happy at the school and feels safe.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is not good and students are not yet making sufficient progress.
- School leaders have been measuring success mainly in terms of attainment and not students' progress, which means that they do not evaluate effectively enough how well different groups of students are doing.
- Although systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are in place, lesson observations do not take place frequently enough and do not focus effectively enough on bringing about rapid improvements that would benefit all students.
- The school has reorganised its senior leadership team and introduced new roles but in order to ensure sustained improvement there is a need to further strengthen the team. For example, currently there is no strategic overview of literacy and numeracy development.
- The effectiveness of subject leaders is variable; some pay enough attention to the progress of groups of students but others do not.
- The results of departmental evaluations are now being used to provide a range of appropriate professional development which responds to the identified needs of staff.
- The system of managing teachers' performance is well organised and has been updated to respond to recent national changes. There is evidence that salary progression is taken seriously and that it now occurs only when merited by sustained good performance.
- The school's range of subjects and courses provides well for the needs and interests of its students. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form there is a good balance of GCSE courses and high quality work-related courses, in which many students are successful. Provision of meaningful work for students during their form periods is less successful and students make little use of this time. There is a rich variety of extra-curricular activities and many of these benefit the local community.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. It is promoted both through the curriculum and in the wider life of the school. It is fostered by a range of visits and by the wide variety of provision in music, art, drama, dance and sport together with effective school assemblies and religious education lessons that give many opportunities for students to reflect on serious issues.
- Leaders have created a very harmonious community. However, the promotion of equal opportunities requires improvement because the achievement of some groups of students, particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium, is not yet good.
- The school devotes much energy to working with the local community and is well supported by the families of its students.
- All aspects of safeguarding are fully met. The governing body and all school staff consider that keeping students safe is one of their prime responsibilities.
- The school benefits from close monitoring and a range of professional support from the local authority. This support is contributing to improvements in teaching in the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have effective committee structures in place for undertaking their statutory responsibilities. They make sure that all safeguarding responsibilities are met and that all appropriate policies are in place. Governors manage the school's finances well, including the additional funding for the resource base and the pupil premium. They can speak confidently about the quality of teaching in different parts of the school and what is being done to improve it. They realise that students' outcomes have been disappointing and can highlight particular areas of underperformance. They show an understanding of data, such as figures within Raiseonline, and can describe measures that are being taken to improve the progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Historically they have not provided enough challenge to the headteacher and other school leaders but are now doing so more confidently. Governors are fully involved

in the performance management system for teaching staff; all promotions, with their financial consequences, are discussed in governor committees. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance.

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	104251
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	427040

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1212
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Dibble
Headteacher	Jim Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 February 2012
Telephone number	01902 368417
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