

# John Masefield High School

Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, HR8 2HF

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Students achieve well. They make good progress and the standards they reach at the end of Year 11 are above average.
- As a result of school leaders' continuous drive for improvement, teaching has improved and students across the school make good progress.
- Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. Skilled questioning and regular checking of learning help students to make consistently good progress in many subjects.
- The sixth form is good. Students benefit from good teaching and make good progress to achieve well.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are given good support. They are making at least good progress and are helped to close the attainment gap with their classmates.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides students with an interesting range of subjects and topics that ensures that they enjoy school. This effectively supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The behaviour of students and their attitudes to learning are good. Students are polite and well mannered. They are well behaved and say they feel safe in school.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable about their roles and continually review the performance of staff and students.
- Leadership and management of the school are good; led by a dedicated and enthusiastic headteacher, they are working successfully to drive the school purposefully forward.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking and feedback is not consistently high across the school.
- Teachers do not always set work that is matched to students' different abilities.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 54 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, there were a number of additional visits to assemblies, tutor sessions and learning walks across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and subject and pastoral leaders, and the Chair and other members of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at break and lunchtimes. They also spoke to four groups of students representing all year groups in the school, including the sixth form.
- Inspectors heard a group of Year 7 students read and listened to students read in lessons.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, and statistical information about students' progress, achievement, behaviour, attendance and exclusions. They also looked at students' work in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 177 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and the 62 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Heery	Additional Inspector
Laura Henshaw	Additional Inspector
Lisa Fraser	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- John Masefield High School is an average-sized rural comprehensive school with a sixth form.
- John Masefield High School converted to become an academy on 1 June 2011. When its predecessor school, John Masefield High School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage. The percentage of students from ethnic minority groups, or whose first language is not English is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional money allocated by the government for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school is designated as a specialist Performing Arts College.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision off site at Herefordshire and Ludlow College, Hartpury College Gloucester, Worcester College of Technology, The Red Cross Ledbury, Keith St Peter Hair Academy and Motorv8.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress for secondary schools.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is at least good in all lessons by ensuring that:
  - there is a consistent approach to marking across the school so that students are well aware of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work and make better progress
  - all teachers use knowledge of individual students' skills, abilities and learning needs to plan lessons that help every child in the class make good progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with broadly average attainment. In 2013, 68% of students achieved five or more A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. This was significantly above the national average. 100% of students achieved five or more GCSE A\* to G, which is also significantly above the national average.
- Value added measures over the past three years have consistently placed the school in the top 10% of schools in the country for performance in their best eight subjects.
- GCSE and A level examination results are particularly strong in English literature, humanities, modern foreign languages, drama, and dance.
- Students currently in Year 11 are on track to attain even higher results and are making good progress across a range of subjects.
- Students' attainment in the sixth form is good and is above the national average. In 2013, 71% of students achieved A\* to C GCE A level grades and 95% of pupils achieved A\* to C grades in Level 3 Vocational qualifications. At 68% A to C grades, AS level results were also above the national average.
- In 2013, students supported by the pupil premium, achieved approximately one GCSE grade below all other students. However, due to the effective use of this funding to provide additional teaching resources, one-to-one tuition and mentoring, and small-group work to support the development of literacy and numeracy, the attainment gap is closing, year-on-year. In the sixth form, students who are supported by the pupil premium are meeting or exceeding their targets.
- Disabled students and those who have special education needs achieve well. The progress of individual students is very carefully tracked and staff make sure that they receive good-quality support. Students who are supported through school action plus and those with a statement of special education needs do particularly well.
- The Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used effectively because the school provides good support for those students in Year 7 who find reading difficult and this is helping them to make good progress. The Year 7 students find the support they receive each week from Year 12 students both enjoyable and very helpful.
- The school has highly effective links with those providers of alternative education for a small number of students. In partnership with local colleges and businesses, students take part in extended work experience placements, or follow Level 1 and Level 2 vocational qualifications. Their progress is monitored in line with all students in the school, so that they make the same good progress as other students.
- The proportion of sixth form students who stay on at school and complete their courses is higher than the national average. Students move on to a range of universities, including higher numbers than the national average gaining entry to the Russell Group of universities.
- Parents and carers are happy with the progress made by their children and greatly value the individual support they are given.

**The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching that was observed by inspectors was predominately good, with some that was outstanding and some that required improvement.
- The best learning seen was where teachers used high-quality questioning that was progressively more challenging; this helped students to think more deeply about their responses. Teachers challenge students to work things out for themselves. An example of this was in a Year 8 English lesson, where students were preparing a news broadcast covering social issues within a community; the students were carefully guided to present their ideas in a professional and well-constructed manner, demonstrating their depth of knowledge and understanding.
- In an outstanding Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher used a range of excellent resources to lead students through an investigation into probability. Students were highly engaged by the enthusiastic approach of the teacher; they enjoyed carefully structured discussion opportunities and were able to apply knowledge effectively. The teacher's skilful questioning encouraged lively debate and discussion. Students were able to deepen their understanding quickly and they made rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm provides a highly motivating learning environment in many lessons.
- Teachers use praise well, which underpins the good levels of enjoyment shown by student in lessons. They have high aspirations for their students and, when lessons are well planned and tailored towards supporting students' understanding of how to improve, students of all abilities are enabled to make good or rapid progress.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively in lessons and make a significant contribution to the learning and progress of the lower-ability students and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. They help students to learn, develop skills and achieve well.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good with some outstanding teaching in history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. Increasing numbers of students are achieving the top grades across a range of subjects. However, in lessons that required improvement, some BTEC students were not given enough guidance and support, as they found working independently too difficult. This had a negative impact on the progress they made.
- Most teachers make good use of information about students' previous learning to plan lessons with more demanding work for all students, including more-able students. This is less successful in lessons where planning does not always take into account the differing needs of the students in the class or build on knowledge they have already gained.
- Marking is variable across the school. It is good in English, mathematics, information technology, humanities and modern foreign languages. Teachers enter into a dialogue with the students, guiding them carefully to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve and make better progress. Where marking is truly diagnostic, students are left with a clear picture of how to improve, but this is not in all subjects.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students have very good attitudes to their education. They are enthusiastic and motivated and show a commitment to learning. They value the quality of teaching they receive.
- Students are proud of their school and their behaviour at lunch and break times is good. They say they enjoy their lessons and that they appreciate the help that is given to them by their teachers.
- The school has effective systems for tracking behaviour and dealing with any misbehaviour. This is understood by students and is used consistently by staff. Students value the school's rewards system.
- Students use their time at break, lunchtime and after school gainfully and appreciate the provision of a wide and varied range of clubs, sporting, artistic, academic and social opportunities that the school provides.
- The school's pastoral system is strong and promotes positive behaviour. Students appreciate that the well-known rules are applied consistently and fairly. Vulnerable students are closely monitored and their social and emotional development is carefully nurtured. Exclusions are low and have reduced over time. The school is effective in promoting a happy, safe and engaging environment for students.
- Students have developed a good range of personal and social skills which enable them to work successfully as individuals, with a partner or in a larger group. The students' ability to engage productively in discussion makes a positive contribution towards their progress.
- The sixth form and Year 11 students behave maturely and take on extra responsibilities across the school in roles such as prefects, learning mentors and support assistants..They are also involved with the school council and often take part in school visits and trips to work with staff in the running of these events. The school provides specialist training in literacy support and reading for sixth formers so that they can support weaker readers in Year 7 to improve their reading ability.
- Students report that bullying is rare and that, when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively by the school. The school's behaviour record confirms this picture. Students are very well informed about the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and the dangers that might be encountered online. Students say that they feel safe in school.
- On the few occasions when lessons are interrupted by low-level disruption, it is due to less engaging teaching that does not challenge students enough in their learning.
- Attendance is above the national average and there are good systems in place to monitor it. The students understand the importance of attending school regularly and they say they enjoy coming to school. They are punctual arriving at school and to lessons. Attendance in the sixth form is good.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors know exactly what the school needs to do to improve. They share their intentions, beliefs and values with all the staff, thereby ensuring that the work of the school is focused clearly on helping all students to make good progress in their learning.
- The monitoring of teaching is robust and frequent, against agreed criteria and it is accurate. Reviews of departments address underperformance strongly and examination results are analysed carefully. The use of performance management has been effective at improving the quality of teaching. The school is in the process of introducing a new pay and performance management system. The school's self-evaluation overall is thorough and accurately outlines areas for development.
- Leaders have provided detailed assessment information to teachers but have not yet ensured that all teachers use this information to match work to students' different abilities to ensure that all students make rapid progress.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good; the open entry policy offers courses to suit students of all abilities and aptitudes. Students are well taught in small groups and they achieve well. External and internal guidance helps students understand what courses are available post-16, which enables them to make informed choices. This promotes a very high rate of completion of sixth form courses.
- The school provides an extensive series of enrichment opportunities in the performing arts, which are popular with students. These include dance companies, drama clubs, two orchestras, a junior and a senior choir; a jazz band, and instrumental groups in brass, woodwind, percussion, and strings. The school stages concerts, drama performances, arts showcases, and musical theatre productions. The school also runs a range of performing arts projects in the local community and primary schools.
- The curriculum is carefully reviewed to ensure that it is up to date so that it provides students of all abilities with opportunities to develop their intellectual, personal and social skills. The breadth of the broader curriculum, delivered through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, greatly enhances the learning opportunities for students
- Students who follow an alternative curriculum are successful and the school monitors their achievement and attendance very well.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is a strong aspect of the school. Assemblies focus on values and encourage students to reflect. The vast range of opportunities that exist for students to develop their artistic, sporting and physical well-being, combined with trips, visits and links with other cultures, develops their awareness of society and prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Feedback from parents and carers is very positive, with almost all saying that they would recommend the school to others. The personalised approach from the school engages parents and carers, and they feel the school does all it can to support their child. A good example of this is how the school has used the pupil premium funding to ensure that students feel the benefits in terms of academic progress and overall experiences. The school provides financial support to enable students to participate in extra-curricular activities and trips, as well as providing extra support to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills. The school tackles equality of opportunity effectively to ensure that no students are discriminated against.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors offer high-quality support to the school but also provide challenge by making sure that all issues are explored thoroughly with school leaders. They have a good understanding of how well the school is doing.
- The governing body has taken an active role in discussing how pupil premium funding is spent and also its impact on the achievement of students who receive this support.
- Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school and they are actively involved in the process of performance management of teachers, including in ensuring the links between teachers' pay and the progress of their students.
- Members of the governing body have the skills and expertise necessary to support the senior team effectively
- The budget is well managed and the governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding, 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136803
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427320

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	880
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	140
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frances Surridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01531 631012
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