

# Hassenbrook Academy

Hassenbrook Road, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 0NS

**Inspection dates** 12–13 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Pupils' attainment and progress have varied over time and between subjects. They have been better in mathematics than in English.
- Some teaching still requires improvement or is inadequate. In these lessons, teachers do not challenge students enough and some inappropriate behaviour results.
- Students are not consistently showing that they can explore ideas or take the lead in learning in lessons.
- Best practice in classroom skills is at an early stage of being shared across the school. The work set is not always closely matched to students' abilities.
- The quality of marking varies across subjects. Students are not consistently shown how to reach the next steps and often do not make the corrections indicated by teachers.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are still not good enough in a small number of lessons. The new, sharper behaviour policies have not yet had a full impact.
- Although now rising, attendance is still low.
- The new headteacher has acted swiftly to improve achievement and teaching but has not yet had time to fully embed all her initiatives.
- Subject leaders have developed their monitoring and evaluation skills, but are not always confident in using their own initiative to lead improvements.
- Governors are supportive and knowledgeable but recognise that there is still work to be done to raise the school's overall quality to good.

### The school has the following strengths

- Progress rates are rising in line with the school's message that a C grade is not always good enough.
- Pastoral systems are increasingly strong. Parents feel that their children are safe and students know that there is always someone to talk to.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are increasingly proud of their school.
- Students have engaged with the notion of 'restorative justice' to improve behaviour.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 31 lessons taught by 28 staff. They observed a range of activities to support individuals and small groups of students. Eight joint observations of lessons were carried out with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, a representative of the local authority and three groups of students. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the mentor appointed for the new headteacher.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 19 staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the school's development plan, data on students' attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a wide range of policies and procedures, and arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors attended an assembly. They carried out a scrutiny of students' work jointly with the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors listened to students reading.

## Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Felsenstein	Additional Inspector
Isobel Randall	Additional Inspector
Timothy McGuire	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of the students are White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average, as is the proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is just above the national average. This is additional government funding for particular groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- A few students in Year 11 attend courses part-time at the Culver Pupil Services Support Centre in Ockenden. Increasing numbers of the students who leave the school at 16 continue their education by attending the Stanford and Corringham Sixth Form Centre which is formed by students from three schools, including this one, and is run by another local school. Sixth form provision was not included in this inspection.
- The school runs breakfast and homework clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The new headteacher has been in post since September 2013. She was previously deputy headteacher at the school.

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

- Make the quality of teaching and learning consistently good or better by:
  - helping students to develop their skills in learning without direct adult support and thinking for themselves
  - giving clear guidance in marking on the next steps to improvement, and making sure that students follow up on the advice given
  - sharing best practice in teaching skills, including matching the difficulty of work to students' abilities.
- Embed the new systems for the management of attendance and behaviour, with particular attention to improving students' attitudes to learning.
- Ensure that recent initiatives to improve teaching and progress rates are implemented consistently across the school, including opportunities for subject leaders to take more responsibility for driving improvement forward.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- From attainment on entry that is usually well below average, students have made variable rates of progress over the last three years. Current school data indicate that progress rates are now rising more consistently towards national averages. Unvalidated data for 2013 show that students at the end of Year 11 achieved average standards from average entry points in Year 7.
- The proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics in 2012 was above national averages. The percentage achieving these grades dipped slightly in 2013 but was in line with national averages. Results for the best eight subjects have been more variable, with business studies and design technology weak. Expected and more than expected progress in English has been weaker than in mathematics. The school has taken swift action to address these inconsistencies and its own data show that steps to improve attainment and progress rates are proving successful. The current focus is on trying to move away from the notion that a C grade is good enough.
- Intervention groups are also proving effective in raising standards, especially in areas like reading to reinforce literacy, and in increased mental mathematics sessions. These programmes are still being refined in order to best meet individual needs, and help the school to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to learn. Breakfast and homework clubs provide regular support to help students embed skills in literacy and numeracy successfully and to develop their social skills.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other students, and some are now making accelerated progress. They are identified in lesson planning and supported regularly by teaching assistants who have individual learning plans. Students have regular opportunities to be mentored by form tutors as well and can request additional mentoring support.
- Pupil premium funding is carefully allocated and its use is reviewed. In 2012, eligible pupils were just over a grade behind their classmates in mathematics and slightly more in English. The gap is closing more quickly over time so that in 2013 eligible pupils were just under a grade behind in mathematics and less in English. The Year 7 catch-up premium is used productively to provide extra sessions in numeracy and literacy, including 'drop everything and read days' in which everyone across the school also takes part to support students' efforts.
- Students were entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics in 2012 but the school has now stopped this procedure. Those who took the examination at the end of Year 11 reached a slightly better standard than those who took it early. More-able students, like their peers, have increased opportunities to make better progress in lessons as the quality of teaching is refined.
- Students who attend courses at other providers make similar progress to their peers. Their progress and attendance are checked on a weekly basis and prompt action is taken should there be infringements of any kind.
- Reading skills are good. Students are encouraged to read fluently and with expression. They have library lessons and regular opportunities to read in class. Students are able to discuss different types of books and how the tone is set by the author.
- Parents feel that their children are making good progress. Students say that lessons are becoming more enjoyable now that behavioural concerns have been addressed and because

teaching is getting better. They feel that attitudes to learning have become more consistently positive.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching seen during the inspection varied in quality. Both outstanding and inadequate teaching were observed. Joint observations carried out with the headteacher and her deputy resulted in agreed grades between inspectors and staff.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not make their expectations clear enough, especially of behaviour. Work is not well matched to the abilities and interests of students so that lower-attaining students have the guidance and support they need and the more able are sufficiently challenged.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers plan lessons that engage students in active learning and thereby maintain students' interest. They encourage students to think about issues in the lessons, and to discuss them with their peers and the whole class. They respond to students' observations by encouraging them to justify and develop their ideas. Consequently, all groups of students, including the more able, make good progress in these lessons. However, students are not developing enough responsibility for remaining on task in their learning or exploring ideas for themselves. This is especially the case where expectations of what students should be able to accomplish are low.
- In many lessons teaching assistants work well together with teachers to question and encourage students to complete work using their own knowledge and skills. In a Year 8 English lesson, both adults worked skilfully in tandem to identify students who needed encouragement and support. As a result of the confidence they instilled in the students, and the whetting of interest in how the story would turn out, everyone was encouraged to contribute. Although such best practice in classroom skills is now identified, sharing these talents is not yet fully spread across the school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons. They have regular opportunities to improve their reading skills and to use computers to help with their learning. Parents are involved at all stages from initial contacts with the school at transition points through to regular meetings with support staff.
- Skills in literacy and numeracy are reinforced carefully in many lessons because a wide range of resources is used to build up students' confidence. Support staff are carefully deployed and there are learning prompts in most classrooms so that students know where to look for additional help.
- Marking and assessment procedures vary in quality. Although work is regularly marked, students do not consistently receive helpful advice on how to improve it. Where such advice is given, they do not always respond by ensuring that errors are eliminated so that progress rates continue to rise as quickly as possible. Here again, best practice in marking skills has not yet been disseminated widely enough.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety around the school are improving but not yet consistently good. Students are well behaved and achieve well where teaching is good or better, but a minority slow the learning in lessons where teaching and activities are less challenging. As a result, progress slows and teachers have to intervene to keep learning on track.

- Students know now that poor behaviour is not tolerated. Precise policies have been put in place with clear rewards and sanctions. Current students are especially keen to receive the rewards on offer online and this system has had a tangible effect in increasing motivation. Students are increasingly proud of their school because of this recognition. However, the new systems for management of behaviour and attendance, especially in improving attitudes to learning, are still at an early stage of implementation.
- Students feel safe and parents agree. They are confident now that there is always someone who will help them because improved pastoral systems have been carefully set up. Students know how to be safe on the internet and staff have been trained to provide clear guidelines.
- Students say that behaviour has improved a lot because the academy has strengthened its systems, especially this term. Interventions, such as restorative work to improve behaviour, have been welcomed by staff and students as a positive step forward. Links with families have increased as part of the school's work to put across its emphasis on improvement.
- Students are aware of the different forms of bullying. School leaders have made the school aware that they will not tolerate bullying. Most students report that bullying is rare and that it is now dealt with effectively and increasingly consistently by staff when it happens.
- Attendance is in line with national averages and improving. The headteacher has laid down firm guidelines about what constitutes acceptable absence and does not allow holidays during term time. Exclusions are low at present. They were higher last year because the school was taking firm steps to make its intentions clear. The school takes swift action on any suggestions of racism.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The new headteacher has acted quickly to identify the areas of behaviour, achievement and teaching that require improvement, but her initiatives have not yet been fully implemented across the school. With the support of the recently restructured senior leadership team and of governors, this is now beginning to happen. Behaviour and teaching are improving and the remaining gaps in attainment and progress are closing. The effective steps taken so far, and an increasing ethos of all parties working together to the same end, mean that the school has the capacity to improve.
- Subject leaders have a strong sense of loyalty to the school and are working together to improve it. They support the work being done by the senior leadership team and could give good examples across subjects of professional development and where policies are being implemented consistently. These include ensuring that literacy and numeracy are reinforced across all subjects. They feel that teaching and progress rates are improving in most areas, in part through their eagerness to lead change. However, not all subject leaders are fully confident in acting to implement changes as part of their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities.
- Procedures for the management of staff performance have been tightened up. Rigorous steps have been taken to tackle underperformance. Progression up the pay scales is linked closely to results and progress as well as to the action points in the school's development plan. Staff are expected to keep a very close eye on how well students achieve.
- The range of subjects on offer in the school is broad and balanced. Careful account is taken of circumstances in the local area. For example, electronics is on offer in part because there are

opportunities locally to work in the field. Precise pathways are being developed to meet the learning needs of particular groups of students and thereby encourage positive attitudes to learning. The school is part of a sixth form consortium run by another school and students are carefully prepared for the transition to further and higher education by the links between the schools and the independent advice and guidance given.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It was well integrated in a science lesson looking at the dilemmas involved in manufacturing medicines from plants. Students have good opportunities to reflect on their responsibilities to others because of the emphasis on conciliatory behaviour. Clubs and activities provide diverse opportunities for students to use their imaginations and pursue particular interests. Students take on responsibilities to lead teams and organise tournaments.
- The school has a good relationship with the local authority which has helped to mentor the new headteacher, together with careful support from an experienced former headteacher.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements. All staff are regularly trained in safeguarding and relevant staff in safer recruitment procedures. Child protection procedures are sound and include regular contact with outside agencies.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is developing well. Governors visit the school regularly to check on the quality of teaching and learning, and to ensure that students are safe. They are trained in the interpretation and use of data. They use their knowledge to check on attainment and progress and to make sure that they ask the right questions. At present, they are actively seeking to augment the range of skills on the governing body.
  - Governors know how the pupil premium is used and review that use carefully. They insist that procedures for the management of staff performance should be rigorous as part of their procedures to eliminate any underperformance. United in determination with the headteacher, they are focused on ensuring that achievement and teaching should rise to the highest levels as soon as possible. They are looking at ways to reward teachers whose performance has been especially successful.

## 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>	137364
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	427179

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	616
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phil Burr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Bamber
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
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