

The Hathershaw College

Bellfield Avenue, Hathershaw, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL8 3EP

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

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. It is not good because

- Although there are signs of improving achievement in the Year 11, the progress of students across years, including the most able and those with special educational needs, is not consistently good.
- Attainment and progress in English and mathematics and several other subjects is too slow.
- Teaching is improving, but it is not yet consistently good and not enough is outstanding. When teaching is not good enough, students lose interest and very occasionally this leads to inattention and slows student progress.
- Teachers do not always give students enough time to make the improvements they have advised them to make and then check that students have done so.
- New appointments at senior and subject leader level have not yet had time to show impact on raising standards.
- Leaders and governors, while driving some improvements, do not always plan and use progress data well enough to tackle underachievement before it becomes serious.
- There is no fully developed shared view of what makes good and outstanding teaching. Performance management arrangements do not always make student progress a main measure of success.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and safety are good. Good relationships are evident in classrooms. Students say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Attendance has risen and exclusions have reduced significantly.
- Focused support in Year 7 is making a noticeable difference to students' ability to read more fluently.
- Senior leaders have introduced new courses and better support that are more appropriate for the learning needs of all students.
- The Hearing Resource Centre makes a strong contribution to the lives and achievement of the students that it supports.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 39 lessons, three of these jointly with senior leaders and managers. They also made shorter visits to some classrooms to look at other issues such as literacy support.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students and inspectors also spoke with students informally in lessons and around the academy.
- Discussions were also held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects or other aspects of the academy’s work. Telephone discussions were held with the Academy’s School Improvement Partner and with a member of staff from the local Pupil Referral Unit.
- Inspectors observed the academy’s work and examined a range of documents, including information on the checking of students’ progress and the quality of teaching, records relating to students’ behaviour and attendance and documents concerning the safeguarding of students. The inspection team also looked at systems for the performance management and professional development of staff. They also considered the academy’s improvement plans.
- Only four responses were made to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection, so no analysis was available. The team considered the results of a survey of parents’ views commissioned by the academy.

Inspection team

Susan Wareing, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector
Michael McLachlan	Additional Inspector
Alan Brine	Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hathershaw College converted to academy status in August 2011. The academy forms part of the West Oldham Cooperative Trust and partners include three local primary schools, Oldham Sixth Form College and Oldham Athletic Community Trust.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school and serves communities from a mainly urban area of Oldham.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is almost twice the national average. (Pupil premium is extra funding provided for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families.)
- Almost three quarters of students are of minority ethnic heritages and English is believed to be an additional language for around 68% of students.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than usually found.
- One student attends part-time off-site provision at Oldham Pupil Referral Unit.
- A Hearing Resource Centre is based in the academy, funded by the local authority and managed by the academy's governing body. The Centre provides specialist support in communication for nine students who are educated mainly in mainstream classes.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - developing a shared view of what constitutes high quality teaching
 - ensuring that all teaching is at least good in order to develop students' deeper understanding of and interest in all their subjects
 - making sure that all marking gives detailed advice to students about how they may improve their work and that all teachers check that students follow up this advice and have opportunities to respond to it
 - ensuring that lesson content is always sharply focused on speeding up the progress of all students.
- Urgently raise the achievement of all students, especially the most able and some of those students with disabilities or special educational needs, so that all make expected progress, and more make more-than-expected progress.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels, including governors:
 - use the academy's very rich information on students' progress in a better way to secure the highest levels of academic and personal achievement for all key groups of students
 - strengthen all planning for the academy's improvement and for the evaluation of its work, including performance management, by making students' progress a main measure of success.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Many students enter the academy with levels of attainment that are well below those found nationally and their progress through the academy in English, mathematics and several other subjects, has not been fast enough over the past two years. This is particularly true in some humanities subjects, languages, design technology and physical education. Students make generally good progress in sciences.
- Students who join the academy with higher levels of attainment and/or with disabilities and/or special educational needs do not all make the progress of which they are capable. From low starting points, pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium support make broadly similar overall progress to that of others in the academy and nationally. Their attainment is broadly in line with other students in the academy. However the more able within this group do not always make the progress that they could.
- Leaders and teachers have a great deal of information about the progress already made by students and about their particular learning needs. This is not always used well to plan work that quickly moves students' learning forward, particularly for the most able.
- The academy's government-funded Year 7 Numeracy and Literacy Catch-up Programme provides good literacy support to students starting from lower points, enabling them to improve their reading ages by more than five months in a single year on average.
- Students know their targets, but teachers' marking does not always give them the detailed advice that they need to know exactly how to improve their work.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to respond to the guidance that they do receive. As a result, they do not always achieve as much as they might over time in order to develop a strong range of skills and deep knowledge and understanding of subjects.
- No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The Hearing Resource Centre is a strength of the academy, making a strong contribution to the lives and achievement of the students that it supports. Some have gone on to gain pre-GCSE, GCSE and Advanced-level qualifications and take up university places.
- The Academy has worked hard to respond to the underachievement of some key groups of students. Senior leaders have introduced new examination courses and interventions that are more appropriate for the learning needs of all students, particularly in terms of literacy. These changes have not yet had time to show impact in external examinations. However, information held by the academy points to improving rates of expected and more than expected progress in the GCSE examinations of 2014.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The academy has made a significant investment in the improvement of teaching. In lessons seen during the inspection around two thirds of the teaching seen was judged to be good. A few examples of outstanding teaching were also seen, but there is still too much teaching that requires improvement and a small amount of inadequate teaching also remains. Students' attainment and progress and their work looked at during the inspection indicate that teaching over time has not been good enough to help them make good or better progress.
- Students learn well or better when: there are very positive relationships and when teachers have high expectations of students and of themselves; teacher's planning is precisely focused on helping all students meet their target grades; and there is good support for the development of students' literacy, for example through the Year 7 Catch-up Programme.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning skilfully to check on students' understanding. They enhance students' learning through visiting experts. There are some high

quality partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants to provide highly individualised support.

- Students' progress slows when the content of lessons does not challenge them, especially the most able, and when they are given extra work, which does not help them to tackle deeper, more complex aspects of the topic. Teachers do not set a clear standard for the presentation of written work. Nor do they take account in their planning of explanations and tasks, the literacy needs of some students. Students therefore can become bored and demotivated.
- There is some good marking and students generally understand the levels at which they are working, but feedback is not always specific enough about what needs to improve. Many students do not have enough chances to respond to the advice given and improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. The academy manages behaviour well and makes consistent use of a wide range of rewards and sanctions, so that behaviour is good in lessons and around the academy. Students are articulate and confident young people. Relationships between students and teachers are very positive and students are courteous and helpful towards each other and visitors to the academy.
- Most students are eager to learn. Free breakfasts followed by short football sessions encourage punctuality and students arrive in lessons well-prepared for work. They take pride in their appearance and in the academy and work well together. Very occasionally, when teaching does not engage their interest, students' concentration wanes and minor inattention occurs. Inspection evidence indicates that parents have few concerns about behaviour.
- Students enjoy taking responsibility, for example as members of the Academy Council, sports leaders and ambassadors, or as Year 11 'reading buddies' to younger students. Students say that this helps them to understand students from different age groups and that their 'buddies' become people they can turn to whenever they are troubled.
- Students treat each other with mutual respect and are proud of the academy's diverse population. They are not merely tolerant of each other, but actively enjoy learning about each other's faiths and values.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The academy ensures that students, even the most vulnerable, feel and are secure in and around the site. This is confirmed in surveys of the views of parents. The academy has made strenuous efforts to improve attendance and it is now high and improving year on year. Exclusions are also reducing, but the numbers of exclusions of students with disabilities or special educational needs remain high.
- Students develop good knowledge of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Some pupils show less understanding of prejudice-based bullying. They know of little bullying in the academy, but say that it is dealt with immediately when it occurs and that it then stops very quickly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The Principal and senior leaders have worked hard to establish a culture of higher expectations in the academy at a time of change. They have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching across the academy, regularly checking this by observing lessons, examining students' work and linking teachers' salary progression to the effectiveness of their teaching. This has helped to increase the proportion of good teaching, but there is no routine performance target for teachers that is linked directly to the progress of key student groups.
- Senior leaders and governors have been slower to recognise and pre-empt students'

underperformance, for example, in English, before it has a negative impact on their progress. The academy's improvement planning needs a sharper focus on students' progress as the measure of success for all its actions.

- The Principal has built the capacity of the senior leadership team by making new appointments, often from amongst the most talented middle leaders. These changes to both teams need time to show impact on raising standards.
- 'We endeavour to maximise the life chances of all' is at the heart of the academy's mission statement. The pupil premium has funded after-school and holiday revision programmes, access to sports activities for students with special educational needs and staffing for one-to-one catch-up sessions.
- The academy has made frequent changes to its curriculum that provide an appropriate balance of academic and vocational subjects. Students of all abilities, therefore, have a similar range of options and there are no barriers to learning. The very low number of students who do not enter education employment or training after Year 11 shows that students are well-informed about further study and career options.
- Students appreciate the many opportunities to take part in a range of sports, drama and other clubs, as well as volunteering activities.
- The academy makes very limited use of courses away from the academy. One student attends the Oldham Pupil Referral Unit, where procedures for keeping students safe and checking regularly on attendance and progress are very robust.
- The academy helps students to develop a strong sense of moral responsibility. Their social skills are well developed and they explore a range of personal and ethical issues through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum.
- Sports and art and design make a strong contribution to students' cultural development, but many lessons miss opportunities to consider aspects of spiritual development.
- The Academy Trust fosters strong partnerships between Hathershaw College and its three primary schools. Hathershaw staff deliver a programme of French, science, sport and dance to Key Stage 2 pupils and a common Attendance Policy and Attendance Officer have improved attendance in all Trust schools. The Hathershaw School Sports Partnership extends the opportunities for pupils to play sport at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

As an academy, Hathershaw College's links with the local authority are not strong. However, training for governors was commissioned from the local authority. The academy uses external consultancy to assist in its self-evaluation and is linked with a local Teaching School in order for staff to observe outstanding teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Some governors are relatively new to their roles but all share a range of professional expertise and experience that benefits the academy's work. Governors are knowledgeable about the academy's strengths and weaknesses and strongly committed to its improvement. Governors are familiar with the Data Dashboard and are deepening their understanding of other information about students' progress. They have begun to ask more challenging questions of the Principal and senior leaders, but were not able to act quickly on the underachievement of some key groups of students in 2013. Governors ensure that the academy's finances are in good order and they understand how the pupil premium is spent. They are not yet fully able to analyse its impact on students' achievement. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, that the academy promotes equality of opportunity and that discrimination in all its forms is rejected.

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	137039
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	440911

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,050
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ateeque Ur-Rehman
Headteacher	Carol Cawkwell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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