

# Uxbridge High School

The Greenway, Uxbridge, UB8 2PR

## Inspection dates

12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Standards in English have been below average for the last two years.
- Students of White British heritage achieve less well than similar students nationally.
- Not enough teaching is good or better. Teaching is not always stimulating so students are not always fully focused.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback is too variable and it does not always provide students with the guidance they need to improve their work.
- Governors have not had the necessary information and training to enable them to hold leaders effectively to account.
- Behaviour requires improvement because some students lose focus and concentration when teaching is not good enough. In addition, some students do not arrive to lessons on time.
- Actions by leaders to improve students' achievement, particularly in English, have not been taken quickly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal has a clear plan for moving the school forward which is beginning to result in improvements in the quality of teaching and students' progress, including in English.
- Both the quality of teaching and students' achievement in the sixth form are good. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good.
- A wide range of courses, academic and work-related, are provided for students in both the main school and the sixth form. The school is increasingly successful in meeting the differing needs of students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively; it has a positive impact on the school as a community where students feel safe and valued.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 teachers teach and visited 39 lessons, of which eight were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, six governors including the chair, school staff, including senior and middle leaders. A telephone discussion was also held with the local authority’s school’s improvement adviser.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school’s progress tracking data, planning and monitoring documentation and self-evaluation. Safeguarding policies, behaviour and attendance records were also examined.
- Inspectors also took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the 51 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Nasim Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Sue Cox

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Bray

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in June 2011. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- This school is larger than the average secondary school. It has an average-sized sixth form and is a specialist technology college.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular pupils, including those eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Almost 40% of students are White British. Other students come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of which are Indian and Black African students.
- Almost half the students speak English as an additional language, with a few students being at the early stages of English language acquisition.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.
- A few students attend full-time alternative education at the Hillingdon Tuition Centre. Some students attend part-time alternative education at Uxbridge College and Springboard College.
- The principal is a national leader of education.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good and better by:
  - increasing the level of stretch and challenge in lessons so that the more able students make good or better progress
  - ensuring teachers across all subjects develop students' literacy skills by correcting spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.
- Raise students' attainment, including that of those from a White British background, and accelerate progress, particularly in English, so that the proportions of students making expected progress, and the proportions exceeding expected progress are closer to or above national figures.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management and so secure more rapid improvement by:
  - ensuring there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and marking across all subjects
  - making sure improvement plans are regularly updated and give greater emphasis to the progress made by all groups of students
  - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders more closely to account for improving the quality of teaching and achievement.

An external review of governance 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

- There has been underachievement in English for the past two years, resulting in too many students not making at least average progress.
- There was a significant dip in students' attainment by the end of Year 11 in English in 2013. From their low starting points, the progress and achievement of White British students was inadequate when compared to the national average for these students.
- Students' progress in mathematics in 2013 was broadly average. The school's current data show that progress is now stronger and the current Year 11 and Year 10 have made good progress in this subject; as a result, both groups are on track to achieve standards in line with the national average.
- The school's data provides evidence that GCSE results in English are also on track to rise in 2014 and 2015 and the rates of progress in Years 10 and 11 have improved, including the progress of White British students. This was confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work.
- Well-planned initiatives to improve students' literacy skills are beginning to have the desired impact. Year 7 catch-up funding, for example, has been used to improve students' reading skills and, as a consequence, reading levels show signs of improvement. Leaders acknowledge that there is a lack of a consistent approach to literacy in all subjects, resulting in variation in the attention teachers give to correcting students' spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.
- Early entry into mathematics GCSE for almost half the current Year 11 cohort has enabled 60% of students to achieve grades A\*–C. A number of students were entered early in English GCSE; in both cases, almost all have achieved their target grade and therefore benefited from the process.
- Attainment in the sixth form has improved over the last few years and students make good progress in both A-level subjects and work-related courses. Many students are motivated to study the sciences and this is one area amongst several where standards have improved. In 2012 and 2013, students made the strongest progress in work-related courses designed to meet the needs of students from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs make similar progress to other students. Although improving, these students make average progress and too few make good progress. The progress made by students of Indian heritage is relatively stronger.
- The gap between the achievement of those students known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers has been narrowing in both English and mathematics. In 2013, these students achieved around two-thirds of a GCSE grade less in English and almost a whole grade less in mathematics GCSE compared to their peers.
- Students' achievement is improving swiftly in subjects like history, languages and computer science, the latter reflecting the school's technology status. Standards in physical education and art have been below average but current data show improvements in both subjects this year.
- The few students who access work-related courses in local colleges either full or part-time make average progress. Most achieve their expected targets and acquire the skills they need to move on to the next stage of their journey.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not enabled students to achieve well in English and a few other subjects, for example physical education and art, and therefore requires improvement.
- In too many books across a wide range of subjects, good progress over time cannot be seen because of weaknesses in the quality of marking and written feedback to students. Sometimes misconceptions are not addressed by teachers and students are not given the feedback they

need on how to improve their subject-specific skills, as seen for instance in some science books.

- Lessons are not always stimulating and, as a result, in some lessons students' motivation to learn dips, as do focus and concentration. The impact of this is that it slows the pace of learning.
- Teachers' planning, in the main, addresses the learning needs of the least and most able students in the class. However, in practice, teaching sometimes fails to stimulate deeper thinking by the most able students, resulting in these students not making the maximum progress possible in lessons.
- The school's records indicate recent improvements in the quality of teaching; indeed, the majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good, resulting in good progress over time for both academic and work-related courses. Year 12 biology students, for example, deepened their understanding of how conjugation in bacteria increases resistance to antibiotics, and they made outstanding progress. This was as a result of teaching which probed and challenged students' thinking.
- Inclusion is a key strength of the school, and the skills of support staff are used well to support those who may be struggling, including those with particular special educational needs and the few at the early stages of learning English. Good induction arrangements, coupled with additional resources for these students, enable them to make the same good progress as their peers.
- Most lessons seen in English were good. One of the reasons why standards in English are now better and progress is stronger is the considerably improved verbal and written feedback that students receive. Marking is of higher quality and more effective in English and history compared to most other subjects.

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

### **require improvement**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Just under one-fifth of the 49 parents who responded to the online questionnaire expressed concern about students' behaviour in the school. A few members of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire also expressed concerns about the management of behaviour.
- Inspectors saw students being generally well behaved in lessons and ready to learn. Where attitudes were less positive, this was often linked to the quality of teaching.
- Punctuality to lessons is an area that has been identified by the school to improve. Inspectors saw many staff at lesson changeover time having to move students on to their next lesson; occasionally, students arrive late to lessons and are slow to settle down to learning.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has fallen this year as a result of the effective implementation of the school's behaviour policy. The number of recorded behaviour incidents of different levels of seriousness has been reduced by half over the last two years.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. There are no groups in the school, including White British students and those with additional needs, whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is consistently good. Students show strong commitment to learning and are good ambassadors for promoting the school's values of 'rights, responsibilities and respect', and the school motto of 'making success happen'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students who met with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that the school helps to keep their children safe.
- Students are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying. They say there is little bullying in school and there are no areas where they feel unsafe. When bullying does occur, staff step in quickly to sort it out. Students feel that they can rely on staff to do their best to help them.

- The school is proactive in raising students' and staff's awareness of e-safety, for example through running whole-school awareness campaigns such as 'Internet Safety Day.' This is supported by discussions in lessons about how to minimise the risk posed by dangers they might meet in the outside world.
- The additional counselling and mentoring opportunities provided by the school are appreciated by students.
- School records show that the few students who are educated for part of the time on a different site are well looked after and kept safe.

## The leadership and management

## require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement, as school leaders, including governors, have not responded quickly enough in the past to falling standards, particularly in English and across most other subjects for the significant proportion of students (40%) of White British heritage.
- As a result of the clear vision and direction set by the principal, 'green shoots' of improvement are emerging. Clear improvements to date show that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The school's planning has not given sufficient attention to the progress of key groups. This has resulted in the school not identifying underperformance by particular groups as quickly as it should, thereby slowing down the pace of improvement.
- The principal is developing strong and capable leaders at both senior and subject levels who have the capacity to develop the school yet further. Their sharper self-evaluation shows that much work remains to be done to ensure that the quality of teaching and marking is consistently good across all subjects.
- The school aims to promote equality of opportunity and it does this well through the rich opportunities it offers students of all backgrounds to access a range of programmes related to music, the arts and sport. Excellent partnerships with, for instance, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Hillingdon Music Service and Brentford Football Club ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. However, the rates of progress of White British students, although improving, are still not as strong as those for other groups; hence, full equality of opportunity has not yet been achieved.
- Staffing issues in the English department have been resolved and the new line management structure is working well in moving the department forward. A clear action plan with tighter targets is already having the desired impact on standards.
- The management of teaching is improving and the proportion of good and better teaching is increasing. Weaker teaching is being tackled well. Inspectors agreed with all of the judgements on teaching made by senior leaders during lessons which were jointly observed.
- Teachers' performance is managed better and only effective teaching is rewarded with progression up the pay scale.
- The choice of subjects offered to students is broad, and suitable alternatives are offered to those students who wish to follow alternative provision. Students spoke enthusiastically of the many sporting activities available after school, as well as the trips abroad which help to enrich students' lives.
- Pupil premium is being better used this year to improve outcomes for those who are eligible. Successful strategies include deploying 10 graduate volunteers from the youth charity 'City Year' to work closely with the pastoral team to provide focused support and guidance to targeted students. A positive impact has already been seen in students' motivation to learn.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are improving but it is not yet securely good because, currently, the achievement of students is not analysed by groups to help target any underperformance even more effectively. Both the courses offered and the quality of teaching have improved, resulting in good outcomes across a range of subjects.

- The school improvement adviser has provided useful support to the school. He has helped to improve leaders' skills in evaluating the quality of learning in lessons and is keen to support the school further.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body has been slow to act to raise standards at the school. The governors have not had a sufficiently sharp grasp of the true picture regarding the school's performance, particularly against a background of improvement nationally. Underachievement in English continued for too long, partly because of the failure to challenge the school quickly enough.
    - Governors have nevertheless, increased their effectiveness to challenge the school leadership by, for example, tracking the performance of six anonymous teachers every half term and asking questions about their performance. As a result, they have helped to bring about a stronger impact on raising achievement, as seen by recent improvements secured in English. However, governors' understanding of how to use data on students' achievement to challenge school leaders more robustly is an area to develop further.
    - Financial management is strong and governors are developing a better understanding of how to hold leaders to account for the effective use of pupil premium funding to make sure that these students do not fall behind others. Governors receive reports on the management of teachers' performance which inform decisions as to whether or not they progress up the pay scale. Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that statutory requirements are met.
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## 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>	136768
<b>Local authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	441117

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>	11–18
<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>	1275
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Waine
<b>Principal</b>	Peter Lang
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 234 060
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