

Hurstmere School

Hurst Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 9AW

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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, staff and governors share the headteacher's ambitious vision for the school. Relentless self-evaluation places the success and well-being of the boys at the heart of the school. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, know the school well and take effective action to correct any aspect that needs to be improved.
- Students' enthusiastic involvement in everything the school has to offer is seen in their mature, courteous behaviour in the classroom and around the school as well as in their keenness to learn. Students are proud to be at the school. All students feel safe and valued.
- Students experience mostly good and sometimes outstanding teaching, to which they respond very positively. They make good progress and achieve well as a result of their own hard work and because of the unstinting help and clear advice from their teachers.
- Teachers and other staff constantly challenge themselves to develop their skills, embracing the training within the school and the training on offer through partnerships with other schools. Staff morale is high.
- Students who need extra help to learn receive all the support they need, with the result that they make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work in some subjects is not always challenging enough to ensure that the most able students in the school reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 40 part-lessons, 12 of them jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with students, with senior and middle leaders and with members of the school’s governing body.
- Inspectors looked at the 149 responses to the online survey Parent View and considered the school’s information about what parents think about the school.
- Inspectors looked at information about students’ achievement and attendance. They scrutinised information about students with special educational needs.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s self-evaluation documents, improvement plan, information about teaching, training and performance management, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, safeguarding documents and records about how the school uses the pupil premium grant and the Year 7 catch-up grant.
- Inspectors analysed 68 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Patricia Barford, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Michael Elson

Additional inspector

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh

Additional inspector

David Smith

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a broadly average-sized secondary school for boys. The school is non-selective in an area where there are grammar schools.
- Hurstmere School converted to become an academy in September 2011. When its predecessor school, Hurstmere Foundation School for Boys, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of disabled students or those who have special educational needs is average at the level of school action and below average at school action plus or with a statement.
- Only one in 10 students is eligible for the pupil premium grant and this is a much smaller proportion than average. This grant is for students who have an entitlement to a free school meal, are in local authority care or are from service families.
- Almost all of the students are from White British backgrounds and very few students speak English as an additional language.
- Around 15 students in Year 7 benefit from the government's catch-up grant for students who have not reached the expected level in English and mathematics.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has specialisms in sports and in science. The sports specialism involves partnerships with other local schools, including with the adjacent grammar school.
- The school is a member of the South East London Schools Alliance, a group of seven schools working together on teaching and leadership training.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' standards and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of the most able students in the school by ensuring that all teachers:
 - identify the most able students as soon as they join the school
 - plan for those students to make as much progress as possible
 - carefully monitor those students' progress towards the highest grades
 - provide extra help if necessary
 - ensure all teaching is geared to extending the most able through training and monitoring work that takes place in the classroom.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Boys enter the school with prior attainment that is close to the national average for the age group. The proportion of boys with the highest available prior attainment is lower than that found nationally. Standards on entry are higher in mathematics than in English. The proportion of boys achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics was broadly average in 2012 and 2013 and above the national average for boys.
- The gap is closing between the achievement of boys for whom the pupil premium provides support and the achievement of other boys. In 2013, there was a gap of around one GCSE grade on average, based on the results in the best eight subjects. The school's data shows that the gap in progress made in English in 2013 by boys for whom the pupil premium provides support and other boys has closed. In mathematics, boys for whom the pupil premium provides support made better progress than other boys in 2013 and this continues in 2014. Progress is closely monitored and extra help provided where there is any cause for concern. As a result, students in receipt of the pupil premium are now making the same progress as other boys and reaching the same standards. Effective use of the Year 7 catch-up grant ensures boys quickly develop their English and mathematics skills to the level they need for their secondary school studies.
- Boys with special educational needs receive very good support and are making good progress in line with other boys.
- The most able boys in the school make good progress but the school acknowledges more of them should achieve the highest grades at GCSE. There are examples of good practice in some subjects where teachers' questions challenge the most able boys to think harder and to use more complex language.
- Early entry has been used in the past for mathematics and English but the school's policy is now under review to ensure that students attain the highest grade of which they are capable.
- Almost all of the boys progress to advanced study. Boys receive high quality advice and guidance to help them in their choice of courses to prepare them for their future careers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are passionate about their work and take every opportunity to develop through training, with the result that most teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- As a result of senior and middle leaders' actions, teaching in English, a cause for concern in 2013, is improving strongly and is no different from the quality of teaching across the school.
- Marking is mostly good, with some that is particularly effective in the guidance given about how to improve, for example in English.
- Literacy, numeracy and communication skills are very well developed across all of the subjects.
- Teachers engage and interest students. Questions are used well to extend students' understanding and analytical skills, with a proper emphasis on using the correct words. Teachers in some subjects ask questions that push the most able boys to think even harder. Leaders in the school know this needs to happen more and as much as possible

in all of the subjects.

- Discussions in lessons about the quality of the work produced are particularly effective. In a technology lesson boys confidently evaluated their work. Classmates listened respectfully and offered each other expert advice.
- Teachers are now rightly ensuring that boys write longer pieces as well as reading widely because they believe that improvements in academic writing will secure higher grades in examinations for all of the students . A boy in Year 7 told an inspector how much he had enjoyed his recent English homework where he was required to write at length about a topic.
- Learning is supported well by teaching assistants; boys value their help in understanding their work.
- Boys are very positive about opportunities to use online resources. The resource for recording homework is valued 'because you always know what the homework is', said one student.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Boys' attitudes to their learning are highly positive and their behaviour in their lessons makes a strong contribution to their progress. Rare examples of misbehaviour are connected with occasionally weaker teaching. Parents and staff agree that behaviour is good.
- Relationships in the school are mutually respectful and considerate. Boys embrace opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities in their tutor groups and in the house system.
- Attendance is at national levels and increasing gradually. Boys are on time for school and arrive promptly to their lessons.
- Boys have a very good understanding of bullying in its different forms. They explain it is rare in school and dealt with quickly if it occurs. Boys say they know to whom to report it and that they know there is always help on hand, including from the recently trained peer mentors.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Boys feel very safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe as a result of the work the school does. Year 7 boys described how quickly they had settled in to secondary school life and told the inspectors that any nervousness was quickly dispelled.
- The school building is very well maintained and well equipped inside and out. Boys respect its cleanliness and good order.
- Boys are smartly dressed and well equipped for lessons; they join in energetically with all activities whether singing and playing instruments, designing and making in technology, discussing ideas in history and geography or playing sport.

The leadership and management are good

- The vision, energy and determination of the headteacher, well supported by his senior team, are mirrored in the way all of the leaders in the school strive to get the very best from and for the boys.
- Middle leaders know their subject, year group or house very well indeed. They are analytical and highly ambitious for boys' success. Professional development has had a good impact on teaching, which continues to improve, and on middle leadership.

- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on a good range of evidence gathered in the monitoring of teaching and scrutiny of boys' work. Plans for improvements are well thought out and monitored closely.
- The curriculum is planned to ensure boys have every opportunity to progress in a broad range of subjects. The sports specialism has had a markedly positive impact on students' enjoyment of school life, with a wealth of opportunities for inter-school competition and for sports leaders and young ambassadors schemes. The extra-curricular programme of sporting activities is extensive.
- The science specialism ensures boys have a wide range of science subjects to choose from. More and more boys are choosing to study biology, chemistry and physics as separate sciences and standards are rising.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through the curriculum to great effect. Particularly powerful is the long-established and very close partnership with a school in Zambia allowing boys, some at first hand, to understand their global responsibilities as citizens.
- Parents are hugely supportive of the school and those who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire are very positive about all aspects of school life.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements; records are kept meticulously.
- The school is developing more local partnerships to ensure that it can draw on advice and provide its own expertise to secure continuing improvement
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the school and know it well as a result of accurate reporting by the headteacher and as a result of their arrangements for linking with subject departments. They bring a wealth of long experience and deep knowledge of the school and its community, enriched by their training, so that they understand how the school's performance compares with that of others locally and nationally.
 - Governors have detailed knowledge about the quality of teaching and how decisions about pay link closely to it in the school's system for the management of teacher performance.
 - Governors discharge thoroughly their responsibilities for safeguarding. They keep a close eye on the use and impact of the pupil premium grant. They exercise shrewd oversight of the budget and ask themselves for every spending decision, 'What's in it for the boys?'

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	137368
Local authority	London Borough of Bexley
Inspection number	441262

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	Modern
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,055
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Douglas
Headteacher	Andrew Stringer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8300 5665
Fax number	020 8300 2039
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