

Wales High School

Storth Lane, Kiveton Park, Sheffield, S26 5QQ

Inspection dates 8–9 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- As a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching, the majority of students make good progress to reach standards that are well above average by the end of Year 11.
- Over time, students have made exceptional progress in history, geography and religious studies.
- Achievement in the sixth form has improved over time and is now good. The sixth form is well led and this makes a good contribution to improvements in achievement.
- Students are asked probing questions to deepen their understanding of what they are learning. They are set interesting tasks that relate to 'real life' situations.
- Sixth-form students make an exceptional contribution to the life of the school and particularly to the good behaviour and safety of students in school.
- The curriculum provides a wealth of exciting opportunities that broaden students' experiences and prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Leaders and managers have developed a strong sense of purpose amongst staff to drive forward sustained improvement. This contributes well to ensuring good teaching and achievement.
- Governors use their skills well to support and challenge the leadership team in order to achieve their high ambitions for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Boys are not yet making enough progress to match the high standards achieved by girls.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school.
- Senior leaders have not yet ensured that all middle leaders are sufficiently well skilled to determine what is required to make teaching outstanding.
- In the sixth form, not enough students are attaining the very highest standards in their chosen subjects.
- When planning for improvement, leaders and managers are not always clear about how they will know whether their actions have been successful or not.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons taught by 44 teachers. Five observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors visited Vector 31, the school’s alternative provider, to see students at work.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in school. Inspectors also listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Executive of the Academy Trust. Also, meetings were held with school staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at the school’s review of its own performance, its development plan, subject development plans, school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and analysed a sample of students’ books.
- Inspectors analysed the 142 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). There were 84 questionnaires completed by staff which were analysed by inspectors. Inspectors took into account the views of two parents who spoke to the lead inspector.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lyn Field	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Robert Birtwell	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- There are more girls than boys in the school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are White British. There are very few students whose first language is believed not to be English.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The alternative provision used by the school is 'Vector 31'. A small number of students attend this provision to study construction, motor vehicle maintenance, engineering and hairdressing.
- The school holds the International School Award and Artsmark Gold status.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing in science.
- Wales High School converted to academy status on 1 October 2010. When it was inspected in November 2012 it was judged to require improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to further raise students' achievement, especially that of boys and the most able in the sixth form, by:
 - using all of the information about where students are at in their learning, in order to match work to their abilities and different needs
 - ensuring that marking of students' work is regular and consistently provides information to help students improve their work, especially in mathematics and science
 - ensuring that the standard of presentation, handwriting and written work of boys matches that of girls
 - reducing the gaps in achievement between groups of students, particularly boys and girls.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - measures used to judge the success of planned actions are sharply linked to rates of students' learning and progress
 - senior staff assist middle leaders so that all of them accurately judge the strengths and weaknesses in teaching within their departments, then provide training so they can support colleagues to improve their teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From average starting points on entry to the school, the proportion of students gaining 5 or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics increased significantly in 2013 and is well above average. Progress is good in English and mathematics. Impressive progress is consistently made in history, geography and religious studies.
- Most-able students make good progress up to Year 11 especially in mathematics, modern foreign languages and humanities. In 2013, the proportion of students attaining A* to A grades at GCSE is above average in most subjects and well above average in some subjects.
- Those courses that are equivalent to GCSE make a good contribution to students' achievement. Good progress is made by those few students educated off site at alternative provision.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is improving but is not yet as good as that of other students in school. More precise identification of those students supported at school action or school action plus is now leading to much improved progress.
- The achievement of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is improving but is not consistently good throughout the school. An analysis of students' work showed that those in receipt of the pupil premium are attaining as well as others in Years 7 and 8. At the end of Year 11, in 2013, those students eligible for free school meals were almost two GCSE grades behind others in mathematics and one GCSE grade behind in English. Gaps in attainment are closing but the school still has further work to do to ensure its commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Boys do not always reach the standards expected of them and there are wider than average attainment gaps between boys and girls.
- Nevertheless, the school is successfully tackling this issue. The most recent set of assessment information provided by the school shows smaller gaps in attainment between boys and girls, pupil premium students and others, and those with disabilities and special needs and others.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been used to introduce 'Golden Hour' and 'World Studies' lessons. These provide additional time for teaching literacy and numeracy skills through interesting topics and other subjects such as music. It has also been used to purchase a new 'Accelerated Reader', to improve students' reading skills. Most students are benefiting well from this additional work to support English and mathematics.
- Very few students are entered early for GCSE examinations. The school's well thought out approach for early entry in mathematics and English serve those few students well.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Courses are well matched to students' abilities and this enables them to make good progress. Good teaching combined with good identification of those students who might require additional support is helping students to achieve well. As yet, there are not enough students achieving the very highest grades, as teaching is not always challenging enough in all subjects.
- Almost all students leaving school at the end of Year 11 or in the sixth form continue in education, employment or training.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is mostly good with some that is outstanding.
- Students are interested in their work as it is linked well to their experiences and 'real life' situations. They are clear about what they are going to learn and what they are going to do. Appropriate amounts of praise and encouragement are used to motivate students. Students settle quickly to their work and make good progress with tasks they undertake.
- Questioning is used well to involve students and to search out what they understand. It is used skilfully to assess what an individual might know and to search out the knowledge of others and deepen their understanding.
- Planning takes into account students' previous work and knowledge. It also ensures that

students use their skills from other subjects. For example, students in science were studying rates of cooling and using their mathematical skills well to plot graphs and complete a range of calculations to check their hypotheses.

- Students' work is generally set at the right level and there are high expectations. It is checked regularly to see if it is too easy or too challenging for students and re-adjusted if necessary. However, there are a few occasions when the work is too demanding for the less able and as a result the pace of their learning slows.
- An analysis of students' work showed high quality marking and excellent suggestions for students to improve their work, particularly in humanities and modern foreign languages. As a result, students make good or better progress in these subjects.
- However, the quality of marking is variable across different subjects and within some subjects. Marking was seen to be least helpful and less regular in science and mathematics than in other subjects. Students' errors in marking or assessing each other's work are not always picked up swiftly enough and this leads to continued misunderstanding, repeated errors and slow progress.
- A strong focus on literacy and the use of technical vocabulary are features in most lessons. However, some boys do not take pride in their presentation, handwriting and the quality of their written work and this is not always checked appropriately to drive up standards.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of students. They are managed very well and support students very well. They work skilfully with individuals or groups of students, use their initiative well and check the work of many students.
- Learning in the sixth form provides well-planned opportunities for students to engage in research and develop their opinions and learn from each other. Inspectors found learning and progress in the sixth form to be good. Occasionally, there are not enough opportunities for students to evaluate and analyse their work in sufficient depth to reach the very highest standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. They are keen to learn, follow the instructions of their teachers and enjoy sharing their ideas to support their learning. Sometimes, students are too reliant on their teachers to make progress with their work.
- Students are very proud of their school and enjoy telling visitors about the good things they do in school. They are very welcoming to visitors. Students wear their uniform with pride.
- Around the school students treat each other with great respect and move sensibly and safely at all times. Students know what is expected of them and behave accordingly. Those students with disabilities or injuries are looked after very well by other students.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students spoken to by inspectors said they felt safe in school. The school checks that students who attend the alternative provision are safe, secure and well cared for. The school provides good information through its curriculum and assemblies on how to stay safe. Students know how to stay safe when using the Internet.
- Sixth-form students make an exceptional contribution to the life of the school. They are excellent role models for others to follow. They manage behaviour at 'hot spots' in corridors. Younger students seek advice from sixth form e-mentors if there are issues about Internet use. Their opinions and advice are highly regarded by younger students.
- Students are clear about what constitutes bullying and they say it is extremely rare. This was confirmed by inspectors through checking the school's behaviour records. Students are confident that when bullying occurs it is dealt with very effectively by the school.
- Arrangements to support vulnerable students are good, with good links to outside agencies to support these students.
- Students enjoy coming to school and as a result attendance is above average.
- Fixed-term exclusions are low and used very effectively. Staff take great care to resolve issues without recourse to exclusion.

- Parents and staff share the same, positive views about students' behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance. They are aspirational for all students. The headteacher has developed a strong sense of purpose among all of the staff and this is driving improvements in students' achievements.
- The leadership team has a strong focus on improving teaching and the achievement of students. They check the quality of teaching regularly and take appropriate action. The headteacher has taken decisive action to improve teaching, particularly in science. Staff are unanimous that leaders do all they can to improve teaching.
- Middle leaders do not always skilfully link the amount of progress students are making to their assessment of the quality of teaching. Hence, the quality of teaching in some lessons is occasionally assessed as being better than students' progress suggests.
- The leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Plans for improvement correctly indicate the main priorities for the school. However, the measures used to judge the success of planned actions do not always focus sufficiently well on how they will improve students' achievement and the quality of teaching. A thorough system for checking students' progress is used throughout the school. Leaders and managers are monitoring the performance of each student, and all of the different groups of students. This is helping to close gaps in attainment between the different groups of students.
- Performance management for teachers is robust and identifies the skills they need to improve. The school provides for the training needs of teaching assistants to make sure they provide good quality support to all groups of students with whom they work.
- The curriculum is extremely well matched to the needs of the students, both in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form. There is a strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy and this is driving up standards in English and mathematics. The school's international work, its commitment to art, music and sport contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors use their skills well to support the school. They have an accurate, first-hand view of the school. They understand students' progress data fully and ask searching questions of the headteacher to determine what needs to be done to improve standards. The governing body knows the main priorities for the school and is involved in the evaluation and improvement planning for the school. They support and challenge the headteacher well in order to ensure that priorities are met. Governors use their skills and make checks on the school's budget. They have approved the use of pupil premium funding and have reviewed its impact. More precise measures for success would assist governors when checking the success of the use of the pupil premium in reducing attainment gaps. They understand fully the arrangements linking teachers' performance and pay. When teachers' targets are not met, they challenge the headteacher to ensure that there is improvement. Governors have received training and ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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	136331
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	442296

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,556
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Holcombe
Headteacher	Pepe Di'Tasio
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
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