

William Morris School

Folly Lane, Walthamstow, London, E17 5NT

Inspection dates 17–18 July 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.

- Since becoming an academy, the quality of teaching has continued to improve and is now consistently good. Teachers expect students to work hard and to do well.
- When students enter the school their academic starting points are very low. They make good progress and achieve well with most attaining nationally recognised qualifications.
- Students with profound learning difficulties are supported well, enabling them to achieve their potential.
- The sixth form is good. Students are provided with a good range of subjects and activities that prepare them well for the world of work or for further study. There is a suitably strong emphasis on improving students' social skills.
- The academy ensures that students' safety is a priority and they confirm that they feel safe in school. They behave well and enjoy learning. Attendance has improved considerably and the rate of exclusions has dipped significantly.
- Students comment on the increased number of interesting activities that are planned for them and say this helps to make learning more enjoyable.
- The Executive Principal provides very strong leadership. Middle leaders are developing good skills and support senior staff well. Senior leaders have driven improvements successfully, enhancing the quality of teaching and raising students' achievement.
- Governors know the school very well. They provide good challenge and support, encouraging senior leaders to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Occasionally, a small number of more able students with moderate learning difficulties do not progress as quickly as they should in their writing and in mathematics.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and frequently, but sometimes they do not make clear how students could improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons. All were joint observations with the executive principal or head of school.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a director of the Hornbeam Academy Trust and different groups of staff including middle leaders. The inspectors also had a meeting with a group of students and spoke informally to them around the school.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, for inspectors to use. The inspectors took account of the school’s own recent survey of parents and carers and an email from a parent or carer, together with 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors scrutinised examples of students’ work and a range of documents. These included the school’s self-evaluation and planning, information on students’ progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Paul Edwards, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- William Morris School converted to become an academy on the 31 August 2012. The school is supported by the Hornbeam Academy Trust. Its sponsor school, Brookfield House, is also part of the Trust.
- The school works closely with its sponsor school. The Executive Principal has responsibility for both schools in the Trust and each has a head of school.
- William Morris is larger than the average-sized special school. It provides for students with a wide variety of needs. The main groups of students are those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with moderate learning difficulties. An increasing proportion have a diagnosis of autism including social and emotional difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well-above average and almost half speak English as an additional language. The percentage supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government to support students eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority, is much higher than average.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision for its students.
- Plans are in place to amalgamate the two schools in the Trust into a single academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of the more able students in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that they are encouraged to write longer pieces of work, particularly in subjects other than English
 - reducing the use of worksheets that limit the opportunity for pupils to write more extensively
 - ensuring that work in mathematics is always sufficiently challenging and builds on what they already know.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking so that it more frequently identifies what the students need to do to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is low due to their particular needs. They make good academic progress from their starting points. Students' speaking and communication skills improve well as a result of good use of resources, technical aids and signing.
- All students are encouraged to read, with a clear emphasis on the use of phonics (sounds that letters make) for those who find reading most difficult and for whom it is appropriate. As a consequence reading skills develop well.
- Students make good progress because activities are usually matched closely to their very different needs. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties are supported well, helping them to make small-steps in communication and in their cognitive learning. There is a good emphasis on essential practical activities in mathematics for those students who have difficulties in this subject.
- Progress in English and mathematics is good. More-able students with moderate learning difficulties and those diagnosed with autism are usually challenged well. However, occasionally, some of these students are not given hard enough work in mathematics and have too few opportunities to write longer pieces of work.
- Students supported by additional funding progress as well as other students. The funding is used effectively to provide equipment such as tablet computers which are used to aid students' communication. Additional adults help to boost students' progress in basic reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- There is no discernible difference in the achievement of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and their peers. Similarly, students who speak English as an additional language achieve equally well. Staff work hard to ensure all students take a full part in all activities and that there is no discrimination.
- All students who have the capacity gain nationally accredited awards, for example Functional Skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Students learn basic skills that help to prepare them for independent living, such as food preparation and cooking.
- Students in post-16 provision make good progress because staff expect them to work hard and achieve well. Since becoming an academy, the school has provided a wide range of BTEC options covering among others, catering, office, retail, care and fitness, and creative industries. It is too early in the academy's history to determine the success of these courses.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good. Students' workbooks and 'Creative Learning Journeys' reflect the good progress indicated by the school's checks on progress. Teachers provide students with interesting activities that develop their academic and social skills well. Classrooms are organised effectively so that teachers can encourage students, no matter what their disability, to take a full part in all sessions. Lessons start promptly and time is not wasted.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology by students and staff to aid learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know their students well.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to students' learning. They are skilled at keeping students on task, particularly those who find concentrating difficult. They help students to understand what it is they have to learn and do.
- All staff are skilled in managing behaviour, particularly those students with known challenging behaviour. As a result, there is very little disruption to lessons. Teachers have high expectations of how students present their work, which helps them to make sure their work is neat.
- Teachers mostly plan work that encourages all students to achieve well. At its best, work is well-

matched to the students' abilities and hard enough to motivate them to do even better. However, some of the more able students with moderate learning difficulties do not progress quickly enough in mathematics because work is too easy for them.

- Students are provided with good opportunities to improve their writing. However, too few of these activities provide all of the more able students with the opportunity to write longer pieces of work, particularly in subjects other than English. The use of worksheets, which have a limited space for writing, also restricts the opportunity for students to write at length.
- Students' achievement is celebrated well. Good verbal praise is given to ensure those students who are unable to read know what they are doing well and what they need to do next to improve. For the more able students who are able to understand comments, teachers provide celebratory feedback where appropriate. However, teachers rarely identify how they might improve their work or make sure students act on the comments they have made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good and the number of temporary exclusions has reduced considerably since becoming an academy. They enjoy learning and this is reflected in their attendance which has improved considerably. Students take care of their school; there is no litter or graffiti on books or around the school.
- Students are keen to talk about how their behaviour has improved in the last two years. They are very aware of the sanctions but are instead keen to reflect on the more interesting activities that are on offer and the impact these have had on their behaviour.
- Students behave well in lessons. Most are keen to take part in the wide range of interesting activities. Older students thoroughly enjoy cooking sessions, measuring and mixing ingredients carefully. They are keen to remind visitors of the need to have clean hands and to explain the process they have gone through to make the 'cookies'. Occasionally, where work is not sufficiently challenging, the enthusiasm of a few more-able students lessens.
- Relationships between staff and students are good. Students have a great deal of respect for the teachers and assistants. One commented of staff new to the school, 'They put a 100% into helping us learn, even though they don't know us that well.'
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say that there is a small amount of bullying but that it is always reported to staff who deal with it very well. They are confident that racist comments are very rare and that homophobic incidents do not happen. Those parents and carers who responded to the school's parent questionnaire also believe behaviour is good and that bullying in any form is rare. School records confirm this to be the case.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and managed extremely well. All staff are kept up to date with safeguarding procedures and know who to contact should they have concerns. Risk assessments are in place, allowing students to undertake a wide range of activities safely. Restraint procedures are implemented correctly and staff undergo training to ensure the safe lifting and movement of students.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the school became an academy the Executive Principal has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Together with senior leaders he has been successful in tackling underperformance and ensuring teaching is good or better. Performance management of staff is well embedded, with a clear drive to reward better teaching but also to ensure staff training needs are met.
- Senior leaders are very ambitious for the school. They are actively seeking ways in which the

school might be reorganised so as to provide the best learning opportunities for all groups of students. The introduction of the 'Creative Learning Journey's Curriculum' has enabled students in Key Stage 3 to have access to many interesting topics that really motivate them. This, coupled with much better checking of students' progress, is ensuring they achieve well.

- Three new outside buildings have recently been constructed. The school will use these to run vocational courses for: hair and beauty; retail sales; and creative industries. These courses will enable the school to have more control over the quality of the training that is available for students.
- The local authority continues to visit the school on a termly basis and provides effective support. Partnerships with the sponsor school and another high-achieving school are also having a good impact on improving students' achievement and the quality of teaching. In addition, teachers' checks on students' attainment are moderated across the schools, ensuring accuracy of judgements.
- Middle leaders have had a good impact on the introduction of subject initiatives and programmes of work for students. However, they are not checking sufficiently how effective teaching is in making a difference to students' learning. Most of these checks are undertaken by senior leaders.
- The curriculum is organised to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Activities are arranged which celebrate the students' diverse ethnic backgrounds. Sensory rooms provide students with profound learning difficulties with the opportunity to appreciate different sounds and lighting effects.
- Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school. There are increasing opportunities for them to become more involved with their children's education. They appreciate the annual review meetings that enable them to contribute their views as to how they believe their children are progressing.
- The leadership team ensures all staff are aware of the school's safeguarding procedures and that they are followed correctly.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has worked hard since the school became an academy to enable it to improve. The governing body has an in-depth knowledge of all aspects of special educational needs and uses this knowledge to challenge and support senior leaders. Governors have a good awareness of the quality of teaching. They have been rigorous in checking the link between students' progress and the quality of teaching when considering salary progression.
- Governors have a clear view of how well the school is performing compared to other similar schools and have identified clearly the next steps to be taken. Governors visit regularly and question senior leaders if they need additional information about how different groups of students are achieving. They know exactly how additional funding is spent and check carefully with senior leaders as to the impact of actions.
- The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively. It has a good overview of safeguarding procedures and is robust in ensuring students, staff and visitors in the school are safe and secure.

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	138454
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	441389

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
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	135
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jaynn Taylor
Executive principal	Gary Pocock
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8503 2225
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