

Hartismere School

Castleton Way, Eye, IP23 7BL

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The attainment all students in a range of subjects including mathematics and English is often well above the national average.
- The achievement of the most-able students is frequently outstanding.
- The headteacher has established an ethos of high expectations and aspiration across the whole school and parents, staff and students share his sense of ambition. As a result, students are very well prepared to make a positive contribution to society.
- Leadership in mathematics and English, and of the provision for disadvantaged and disabled students and those who have special educational needs, is outstanding.
- The schools' work with its partner primary schools is highly effective and ensures a smooth transition for students when they first enter the school.
- Governors and school leaders have a good understanding of their school and monitor the quality of teaching expertly to ensure that achievement is always high. Their work to promote British values of tolerance and respect is exemplary.
- Students' behaviour both around the school and during lessons is excellent. They develop outstanding attitudes to learning and have a healthy respect for each other and their school environment.
- The school's work to keep the students safe is outstanding and monitored regularly and rigorously.
- The school instils a deep understanding of responsibility in all students, and their charity work through the Hartismere 100 is impressive.
- The quality of teaching across the school is outstanding. This leads to remarkable rates of progress across subjects and years.
- Provision and leadership in the sixth form are outstanding. As a result, progress is at least good. A high proportion of the students go on to higher education including the top universities.
- Marking in a few areas is not consistently of the same excellent quality as that found in the great majority of subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 38 lessons, of which 11 were in the sixth form, to observe behaviour and the quality of teaching.
- Five observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspection team looked carefully at the quality of work in students' books in order to assess their progress.
- The inspection team took into account 181 responses to a school initiated parental questionnaire, 138 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and 65 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Following an investigation by Ofsted during the inspection, 60 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were removed because of concerns about the validity and reliability of the source of the responses.
- The inspection team met with governors, senior leaders and the School Improvement Partner. They also met with senior and middle leaders and different groups of students, including those in the sixth form.
- The inspection team analysed and scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation, which included evidence from governors' minutes, school policies and progress information.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of students in the school and when attending external providers were examined by inspectors.

Inspection team

Pete Sewell, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Jeffery Quaye	Additional Inspector
Russell Ayling	Additional Inspector
Linda Austin	Additional Inspector

Pete Sewell is appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Full report

Information about this school

- This is the first inspection of the school since it converted to academy status in September 2010. When the previous school, Hartismere High School, was last inspected in February 2010, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Hartismere School is a slightly smaller than average secondary school.
- The school population is mainly White British with a lower-than-average proportion of students from other ethnic groups.
- Approximately a fifth of the school population are disabled students and those who have special educational needs, which is slightly above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students (those known to be eligible for the pupil premium) is approximately 13%, which is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small minority of students in Key Stage 4 follow an alternative curriculum. These students attend vocational courses at Otley College for part of the week.
- The school is supported by a School Improvement Partner.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teachers' marking in a few subjects to secure even greater progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has a clear vision for his school which is very effectively communicated at all levels. The motto 'Children both learn and serve' is at the heart of Hartismere School. School staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher and school leaders. They are proud to be associated with the school. Students talk about their school in glowing terms and are appreciative of the many and varied opportunities made available to them both in and out of school. Consequently, the school's ethos is highly positive and ensures excellent standards in students' behaviour and in their achievement.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and reflects the deep understanding that governors and the headteacher have of their school and its many strengths and possible areas for improvement. The school has consistently delivered very high standards of attainment but this has not meant that school leaders and governors have become complacent. They are continually striving to improve the school through imaginative and highly effective methods.
- The school has strong links with its main primary partner schools and has developed an excellent programme for teaching English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 that ensures students' transition between the primary and secondary phases is very well-managed. This has meant that pupils entering Hartismere School understand the high expectations that school staff will have of them before they arrive.
- Middle leaders are a highly effective group. They have a clear understanding of their role in raising attainment and do this effectively through regular progress meetings with senior leaders, heads of year and the school's special needs coordinator. Middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning within their own areas carefully, and use every opportunity to improve their own teaching as well as those they lead. Leadership in mathematics and English in particular is outstanding and has led to consistently strong achievement.
- All school staff are highly complementary about the quality and variety of continuing professional development that is offered to them. The school operates a highly supportive approach to school improvement and teachers are offered the opportunity to attend courses and events which will improve their own teaching and improve students' achievement. Newly qualified and newly appointed teachers are led very well; they speak highly of the support they have received from the school.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and effectively through lesson observations, work scrutiny and parent and pupil surveys. The quality of feedback that staff receive about their teaching enables them to refine what they do, and to become even more effective. Decisions about teachers' pay progression are tied directly to their impact on students' achievement. As a result, the quality of teaching is outstanding.
- The school has a number of effective mechanisms in place to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. All students in Year 8 and Year 9 attend an elective lesson (an additional lesson which students can choose) as part of their normal timetable. The lesson they choose is guided skilfully by the school which undertakes a series of screening tests on entry. These tests are designed to target disabled students and those who have special needs, who were not previously identified such as students with dyslexia, and to also identify students that have latent academic, creative, sporting or musical talents.
- The leadership of the special needs department is outstanding. The special educational needs coordinator and a team of highly qualified teaching assistants use a variety of screening tests and school information to ensure that these students receive appropriate support to enable them to make at least good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes a well-designed programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Students at all key stages have access to high quality advice and guidance about decisions regarding the next stages in their lives. Together this ensures that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong and that they are extremely well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The use of the Year 7 catch-up grant to support literacy has a positive impact on the achievement of the students it supports.
- The schools' arrangements for safeguarding students are exceptional and meet all the statutory requirements.
- The pupil premium grant is used to target eligible students and has been very effective in strengthening their achievement in mathematics and English.
- The school receives good support from its School Improvement Partner, who conducts regular school reviews, maintains constructive and professional dialogue with the school's leaders and helps leaders identify key areas for improvement very effectively.
- The progress, attendance and behaviour of a very small minority of students that attend provision at Otley College are monitored closely and effectively.
- School leaders responded decisively to a drop in English attainment in 2013. As a result, it rose significantly in 2014 to match previous high levels. Similarly, when results fell slightly in 2014 in a small number of subjects, for example in French, photography, business studies and design technology, leaders acted swiftly to identify the causes of these dips and bring about immediate improvement. This has ensured that standards in these subjects are back on track to regain the high levels they have historically seen.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are highly capable. They provide effective leadership and hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for the overall effectiveness of the school. Governors have an active role in the performance management process and monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely. They know where teaching is strong and what is being done to improve it further. Governors understand the importance of maintaining a clear link between teacher performance and pay progression. They have a good understanding of the use of information within the school and they monitor patterns in students' progress closely. They share the headteacher's high expectations and ambition for the school and are proud of the values and principles held by the students when they leave school. Together with leaders at all levels, they work extremely effectively to keep the students' safe and to promote British values of tolerance and respect.

The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students throughout the school display outstanding attitudes to learning. They arrive at lessons well-prepared and eager to learn, and take full advantage of the opportunities they are given to enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and where they occur, the school deals with them swiftly and appropriately. Students fully understand the rules that the school uses to promote positive attitudes to learning.
- Attendance rates are high and well above national averages. The number of students that are persistently absent and the number of exclusions are very low.
- Students are polite and well-behaved around the school. They are friendly and welcoming when a visitor enters the room. Behaviour in social areas such as the dining hall is outstanding; during the inspection a number of Year 6 pupils were in school for an additional textiles lesson and they felt safe and part of the school as well.
- Students are proud of their school and feel that the school offers them a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities to choose from including the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, recent trips to Iceland, Cambridge and Norwich and the next year's visit to Germany.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school's systems to ensure that students are kept safe were tested during the inspection and were found to be exemplary. The school's approach to keeping students safe is at the very core of its culture, ethos and expectations.
- Students have a refined understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to safety. The school was able to provide inspectors with compelling evidence that the overwhelming majority of students fully understand the different types of bullying and know how to deal with them. Bullying is extremely rare and dealt with highly effectively.
- The personal, social and health education programme covers all the elements that students need to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. These lessons are delivered in an effective and active way that encourages students to take these issues seriously. Students talk knowledgeably about tolerance and respect and the impact of this is seen through the quality of relationships observed in lessons, around school and through school information provided from behaviour records.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students that attend Otley College are outstanding.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding in a wide range of subjects and across all years. The quality of teaching is particularly high in English and mathematics and has led to outstanding levels of progress in both external examinations and in the progress current students make in lessons.
- Teachers routinely have high expectations of their students and this leads to exceptional levels of progress for all students but notably, amongst disadvantaged and disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This was seen for example, in a Year 10 music lesson, where students were expected to complete an extensive piece of writing in response to some minimalist music. The students responded positively to the challenging task because of the teacher's high expectations.
- Most teachers make learning enjoyable by providing challenging tasks which help the students make outstanding progress. Teachers ask open-ended questions which develop high level reasoning and lead to a deep understanding of the subject matter being studied. Teachers use carefully directed and timely support and intervention to ensure that all students make at least good progress in most lessons.
- Detailed feedback from teachers to students about their work ensures that students make significant and sustained gains in their learning. This was observed during the inspection in a large number of subjects. The use of an on-line tool for promoting a constructive dialogue between the teacher and student was seen being used in computing and history to great effect. Just occasionally, marking in a small minority of subjects is not as detailed and helpful as it is in the very best examples seen by inspectors.
- Teachers are provided with useful information about the students' prior attainment and personal needs which enables them to plan and deliver high quality lessons that support different groups of learners very well. This was seen being used particularly effectively in mathematics and physical education.
- The promotion of literacy across the school is having a significant impact. Students are expected to have a current reading book and read regularly in form time. There is an emphasis on reading for pleasure and this is supported by a reading programme and high quality reading materials in Years 7 and 8 and competitions in all years. The literacy coordinator and special needs coordinator ensure that all teachers have current information on reading and literacy levels. These are used particularly well to support extended writing in science and research projects in mathematics.
- Student's social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is well established in many subjects. For example, in a French lesson the students had a mature and well informed discussion about the wearing of the veil by Muslim women in France. This was a powerful discussion conducted in the French language.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Attainment across a wide range of subjects has been consistently high over a number of years and is frequently well above average. The proportion of students achieving five A*-C grades including English and mathematics in 2014 was above average. The proportion of students making expected progress in English and in mathematics was also above average in 2013, the latest year for which comparative information is available. The progress of students in the school indicates that levels of attainment are likely to be even higher in 2015.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is rising and gaps between these students and their peers have narrowed rapidly in English and mathematics. The gaps in attainment between these students and others within the school, and in comparison with all students nationally, was nearly one grade in English and two thirds of a grade in mathematics in 2013. In 2014, disadvantaged students performed as well as all students nationally in mathematics and nearly as well in English, while a small gap remains between these students and their peers within school. More students who are eligible for support from the pupil premium are on track to gain higher grades this year than in 2014. The progress of disadvantaged students within the school shows that, in most subjects, they perform as well as their peers.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making excellent progress. The support offered through well trained teaching assistants, combined with useful information provided for the class teacher, ensures that they make at least expected progress and often do better.
- Students are set aspirational targets to achieve. School leaders use a well-developed tracking system to identify students that are at risk of underachievement and ensure they receive appropriate levels of intervention so that their progress continues to accelerate.
- Students that attend off-site provision at Otley College have historically achieved well. The current group is also making good progress as their attendance, achievement and well-being are all closely monitored by both the school and the college.
- The progress of the most-able students is outstanding. The school has effective systems to identify and support these students so that they realise their full potential. The electives programme at Key Stage 3 is used to extend and develop the skills of the most able students in preparation for their GCSE subjects.
- The school does not enter any students for early examinations.

The sixth form provision is outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding and promotes a culture of high expectations and aspiration amongst teachers and students. The proportion of students that continue on to higher education is high: in 2014 this was 84%, and this includes many applying to the top universities.
- Attainment at GCE A level rose considerably in 2014 and the three-year trend shows that achievement is accelerating year-on-year. School information indicates that most students make at least expected progress and in many cases more than expected progress across a range of subjects.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers give regular feedback to students about how to improve their work through verbal, written and sometimes on-line comments to establish a constructive dialogue with students. This results in students making accelerated rates of progress and gaining a deeper mastery of the subject. For example, in a Year 13 photography class, the students made outstanding progress because the teacher encouraged a deep analysis of the ideas needed to formulate a development plan through effective questioning and feedback.
- Students have highly developed attitudes to learning when in lessons and use their personal study time wisely. Behaviour around the sixth form is exemplary and students are fully focused on their study programmes.

- The sixth form provides a highly effective learning environment for its students. Each student has a study programme which matches their needs and aspirations. Students feel supported through the process of applying for an apprenticeship, employment or a university place by their form tutor and the head of sixth form. The school provides a lecture programme, visits to universities and information about open days to ensure that students are fully informed about the opportunities open to them. Those not applying to university complete a career planning booklet which guides them towards making sensible choices for their future.

- Students feel safe and well-supported by the school and incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with effectively by the school. The school has provided a series of assemblies to promote safety and students know how to report any concerns. Attendance rates in the sixth form are high and monitored rigorously.

- The sixth form leader effectively uses progress data very effectively to monitor patterns in students' achievement in different subjects. Swift action has already been taken to ensure that dips in the GCE results in a small number of subjects in 2014 will not be repeated and that students currently studying these subjects are making outstanding progress.

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	136271
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	449414

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	921
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Ravenhill
Headteacher	Jim McAtear
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01379 870315
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Email address	office@hartismere.com

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