

Huntcliff School

Kirton-in-Lindsey, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 4NN

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The proportion of students who gain five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is consistently above the national average and rose considerably in 2014.
- Leadership is good and has secured improvements in teaching overall that have resulted in strong progress across most subjects.
- Literacy has been a focus for leaders and this has enabled good standards to be gained in English, whilst supporting progress in other subjects.
- Overall, all groups of students, including disadvantaged students, those who have special educational needs and the few who attend alternative off-site provision, make good progress.
- Teaching is continuing to improve and is resulting in students' overall good progress across most subjects.
- Attendance rates are consistently high and exclusions are extremely rare, as a result of leaders' and students' value for education.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good across many areas of the school. They say they feel safe and they know where to seek help should they need it.
- The pastoral care for students is good. There is strong support for the promotion of British values and for developing students' awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
- Governors hold leaders and teachers at all levels to account for the progress students make across all areas of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking and assessment remain inconsistent, resulting in some students not always being guided to make good progress.
- Occasionally, teaching does not excite or engage students enough so that they do their very best at all times.
- The proportion of students making more than expected progress in mathematics is lower than in English.
- Not enough disadvantaged students make good progress in mathematics, resulting in a gap in attainment when compared to their peers nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons, one of which was a joint observation with a senior leader.
- A number of separate learning walks were carried out by inspectors to establish typical behaviour and attitudes of students to their lessons and across the school.
- Formal discussions were held with three groups of students, representatives from the local authority, governors, senior and middle leaders and members of the raising standards committee.
- Additionally, informal discussions were held with students at break time and around the school to gather their views about behaviour and learning. Inspectors also observed behaviour before and after school.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in students' books as a formal exercise in mathematics, English and science.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documentation in regard to safeguarding and child protection, minutes of governors' meetings, performance management, progress data and external reports.
- Inspectors took into account the 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire, a letter and an email from a parent.

Inspection team

Colin Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Pridding

Additional Inspector

Steven Goldsmith

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Huntcliff School converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, Huntcliff School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is a smaller-than-average size secondary school and is situated in a rural part of North Lincolnshire. Approximately two-thirds of the students travel some distance to the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is below the national average. The pupil premium supports those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The overwhelming majority of students in the school are of White British heritage and the proportion of students who come from a minority ethnic background is very low.
- The school holds the Inclusion Quality Mark and Career Mark.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for Year 11 students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a very small number of students. These providers are Coritani Academy, 7KS South Park Enterprise, The Darley Centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, so as to engage and inspire students to make the most rapid progress and achieve their very best, by:
 - ensuring all staff use the school's agreed marking policy to inform students of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve, so marking gives them challenges
 - increasing students' excitement in their learning so that all lessons maintain more consistent challenge and interest.
- Further increase the progress students make across subjects overall by:
 - further narrowing the attainment gap for disadvantaged students in mathematics when compared to their peers nationally
 - further enhancing the proportion of students who exceed expected progress in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully led the school for a number of years so there is an established ethos of care, calm, order and aspiration. She has ensured that newer senior and middle leaders are involved fully in school improvement and this has promoted responsibility and accountability well.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and give leaders their full support for the way it is led and managed.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Senior leaders have developed a successful methodology of quality assuring the standards of teaching across the school. This uses a wide and varied system of checking that includes learning walks, students' progress tracking, lesson observations and work scrutiny, and these different procedures are put together to provide leaders with an accurate conclusion of the performance of staff. This informs performance management procedures well, ensuring teachers only progress through the pay scales when it is appropriate.
- Support for literacy is extremely strong and the English department is one of the strongest in the school. Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support students to make rapid progress in their literacy by ensuring that they read appropriately in lessons. Ensuring students are able to grasp the basics of literacy when they enter the school is a priority that has proven successful in ensuring that students make good progress in all subject areas. The support for numeracy is still developing but it is showing signs of stronger improvement.
- Leaders foster good relationships including between students and staff and there is an obvious culture of care and mutual support across the school.
- The majority of parents feel the school is well led and that their children are supported well.
- School leaders work hard to promote equal opportunities for all. Despite a relatively small teaching workforce, leaders have ensured that all students can access a wide and varied curriculum.
- The pupil premium funding has been used well by governors and senior leaders to provide disadvantaged students with appropriate support and intervention to enable progress rates to rise faster. Gaps in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students and that of other pupils nationally and in the school have narrowed over time.
- The work of leaders to tackle discrimination is good. Students say that inappropriate language is tackled quickly by staff and that they receive strong support for understanding those of different faiths and backgrounds.
- Leaders commission external challenge and continue to be supported by the local authority, which they say is valuable to them. The support given to the school from the local authority is effective.
- Leaders monitor attendance and behaviour extremely accurately. Despite the majority of students travelling to school by school bus, attendance rates are good and consistently above average. This is a mark of the culture school leaders have developed over time to ensure students recognise the importance of their education, and of the systems in place to include all students and challenge absence.
- Attendance for the very few students who attend alternative provision, their behaviour and the progress they make while on placement, is tracked systematically ensuring these students attend as regularly and make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles. They relish their responsibilities and are extremely supportive of their senior leaders, governors and their students. Middle leaders say that are able to develop school improvement work and feel a sense of responsibility as a result. They work collaboratively together and with senior leaders, for instance through the raising standards committee, and this has already resulted in very successful routines and procedures that are ensuring positive outcomes for students.
- The support for both British values and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of students is excellent, preparing them well for the next stages in their education or employment. For example, this year, as a reflection of the general election, the new head boy and head girl had to campaign for, and be elected to, their positions. This enabled students in all year groups to recognise how the democratic process in the United Kingdom works.
- Leadership of the provision for students with special educational needs is strong and is both extremely caring of the students and welcoming of them. Students know that they will be looked after well. These students are tracked meticulously in their learning by leaders and the progress that they make matches the levels of progress of their classmates.
- Leaders recognise the importance of information, advice and guidance and hold the Career Mark. Students say that they are offered support from an early age in making the right choices for their future.
- The school ensures that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are effectively

implemented through secure checking of references for new staff and a meticulous record of staff details.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. Governors know precisely the school's priorities and challenge leaders rigorously to account for the progress students make. Their good understanding of data to ask searching questions about the comparative performance of different groups of students.
- Governors ensure they are integrated in the daily life of the school. For instance, they have received training from the local authority to be able to carry out learning walks around the school and that this support is enhancing their skills.
- The governing body generally monitors the use of the pupil premium funding well and oversees its effective use in narrowing gaps in the achievement between disadvantaged students, other students nationally and their classmates.
- Governors monitor the quality of teaching well and they check with accuracy the performance management of staff. They ensure teachers progress through the pay scale only when appropriate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Around the school, in classrooms, corridors and the yard, students demonstrate high levels of courtesy, calmness and respect for each other.
- Students are confident young people who speak with clarity, conviction and obvious empathy to staff and to visitors. For example, one student stopped an inspector and asked with genuine interest how they were and if they were enjoying the inspection.
- Students say bullying is rare, and that when it does happen, teachers are quick to deal with issues positively to correct poor behaviour. The overwhelming majority of staff and most parents believe behaviour is managed well by school leaders.
- Systems put in place by leaders to monitor the types and rates of bullying are secure and robust, helping them to spot early signs of patterns of behaviour. Behaviour in alternative provision for the few who attend is monitored carefully both by the provider and school leaders and it is as good as their peers in school.
- Despite being on a site with many buildings and corridors, it is well kept. Students mostly look after their environment and litter is minimal.
- Students' attitudes to their learning are mostly good. They come to school well dressed, are prepared for learning with the right equipment. However, occasionally, students are not as engaged or inspired in their learning as they could be and this is leading to slower progress than might be seen.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that they feel safe and are safe in school. The overwhelmingly majority of parents and staff also believe that students are safe in school.
- Attendance rates are consistently high and students' punctuality is excellent. This is despite over two-thirds of students travelling some distance and is as result of good transport planning and leaders who are quick to challenge those who are absent. Students who attend alternative provision are also safe. Providers check attendance daily and report directly to the school should absence occur.
- Fixed-term exclusions are extremely rare and used as last resort. Additionally there have not been any permanent exclusions for a considerable length of time. This is due to the care and support the school gives to students who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark in recognition of its inclusive procedures.
- Recent improvements to site security are enhancing students' safety in school even further,
- Students are keenly aware of how to be safe online due to good-quality information being shared in assemblies and information technology lessons, as well as constant reminders by leaders as to how to be safe. They can describe clearly how to keep themselves safe when using social media.
- A few students demonstrated that they were not always fully aware of how to keep safe at all times in practical lessons. For example, two students were observed not wearing available goggles when using small electrical saws. Teachers quickly corrected this behaviour.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching ensures students make good progress overall. Teachers know their subjects well. Teachers plan lessons that are pitched at the right level to ensure that students make good progress overall.
- Some teachers do not always take into account the particular interests of their students to provide tasks to excite or inspire all students to learn well.
- The teaching of literacy has been a priority for the school and ensures that students are able to communicate effectively in all lessons. Whilst the English department have led on this, all teachers promote students' literacy skills effectively
- The promotion of numeracy skills across the school is at an earlier stage of development but is already helping to impact on better progress in mathematics overall. As a result of the improving quality of teaching in mathematics rates of progress are increasing, but improvements have not been as swift as those seen in English.
- Teachers usually adapt tasks carefully and appropriately, as a result of their understanding of how students are gaining knowledge and developing skills within lessons and over time.
- Inspectors' analysis of students' work identified very strong marking procedures in some subjects, particularly in English. As a result, students are clear about their targets in English and are making very good progress. A few teachers in other subjects do not always rigorously apply the school's agreed marking and assessment policy, which means that students are not fully aware of how to improve their work.
- Most teachers have consistently high expectations and this helps to foster strong challenge and good progress. As a result, students themselves have high aspirations and expectations and a genuine desire to do their very best at all times. It is evident that teachers have supported school leaders in encouraging a respect for education, as can be seen by high attendance and punctuality.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with attainment generally below average, but they reach well-above average standards by the end of Year 11. In 2014, the number of students who gained five good passes in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, exceeded the national average.
- Teaching in some subjects, such as English, geography and resistant materials, consistently supports students to achieve the very highest results. The results in 2014 in these subjects showed the grades students in Year 11 gained greatly exceeded the national averages.
- Current evidence for all year groups and across a range of subjects, shows students are making good progress overall.
- In 2014, progress rates across all groups of students in English were high compared to the national average. While students are generally making much better progress in mathematics than they did in the past, there is the potential for more students to make good progress.
- The attainment gaps between disadvantaged students in GCSE English examinations in 2014 and other students nationally and in the school narrowed to almost zero. This is because disadvantaged students had made good progress over time and had achieved well.
- Some attainment gaps remain in mathematics and disadvantaged students were generally half a grade behind other students in the school and other students nationally. This was because too few disadvantaged students made the good progress needed to fully close this gap.
- The most able students achieve well overall in most subjects to reach high grades in examinations. Even more students are capable of doing so in mathematics, physical education, Spanish and French.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported well in their learning. Consequently, they make the same good progress as their peers in school.
- The small number of students who access alternative provision on a part-time basis for vocational studies are diligently tracked by school leaders. The progress they make in those lessons is in line with that of their peers in school.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

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	137832
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	449696

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	528
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Pat Frankish
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Bond
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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