

# Poole High School

Harbin Campus, Wimborne Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2BW

**Inspection dates** 23–24 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Subject leadership is not consistently effective. This leads to variations in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for students within and across subjects.
- Students do not make the same good progress or achieve as well in English as they do in mathematics.
- Teaching in English at Key Stage 3 does not consistently ensure that students develop the skills required to make good progress at Key Stage 4.
- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what students can achieve. This limits students' aspirations, especially for those who are lower attainers.
- The academic targets that senior leaders set for students are not always challenging enough, especially for those who are lower attainers.
- The tasks set by teachers, most notably at Key Stage 3, do not always inspire students or motivate them to achieve their best. Students' attitudes to learning are, therefore, not consistently good.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently provide the feedback necessary to help students to make good progress.
- Students do not routinely use the advice and guidance of their teachers to correct, extend or improve their work. This slows their progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students' achievement over time has not been good enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Recently appointed leaders have broadened the experience of the senior team. They are now able to hold others to account effectively.
- Governors effectively oversee the work of the school.
- Pastoral leaders are now skilled in identifying where students are underperforming. They have successfully improved attendance.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It ensures that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students feel safe at school and their view is endorsed by almost all parents.
- Students behave well around the school and at social times. They are polite and courteous towards adults and each other.
- The leadership of the sixth form is effective. The actions taken are beginning to improve students' achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 40 lessons, 35 of which were jointly observed with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted a number of shorter visits to classrooms to observe the work of teaching assistants and to review the impact of teachers' marking and feedback on the quality of work in students' books.
- Inspectors observed the work of several tutor groups. They conducted scrutinies of students' work in English and mathematics, and of the work of disadvantaged students in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of students from each year group, a representative from the local authority and six members of the governing body, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors.
- A telephone conversation was also held with the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to aspects of the school's work, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, the school development plan, information relating to the quality of teaching, data on the progress and attainment of students, records of the work of governors and records of students' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 83 responses submitted by parents to the online survey, Parent View. They also considered the school's own survey of parents, one letter and two emails submitted by parents during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed the views of the 142 members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Teresa Gilpin	Additional Inspector
Jason Wye	Additional Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Additional Inspector
Patricia Leigh	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Poole High School is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has a sixth form.
- The headteacher was the school's deputy headteacher at the time of the last inspection. She became headteacher in May 2012.
- Both deputy headteachers and two assistant headteachers have been appointed since the last inspection. The current sixth form leader has been in post since September 2014.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for students who are eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- A small number of students attend alternative education off site at Bournemouth and Poole College and The Quay.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for Year 11 students' progress and attainment.
- The school has been awarded the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award at level 1.
- The governing body has recently been reconstituted following an internal review of its structure.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in English at Key Stage 3 in order to ensure that students have the necessary skills to make good progress in Key Stage 4.
- Accelerate the progress of students, including those in the sixth form, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - set high expectations for students which motivate them to achieve well
  - consistently provide students with precise guidance that identifies the next steps in their learning
  - provide opportunities for students to reflect and act on the advice given about how to improve their work.
- Ensure that students' attitudes towards learning are consistently good by making sure that all teachers plan work that inspires students to achieve their best.
- Ensure that leadership, particularly of subjects, is consistently effective so that:
  - the quality of teaching improves and is regularly good or better
  - academic expectations are high for all groups of students
  - all groups of students make equally good progress, especially at Key Stage 3.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there is variability in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for students across and within subjects.
- Middle leadership is not consistently effective. Subject leaders do not yet routinely take responsibility for actions to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged students. However, pastoral leaders are adept at identifying when help and support are required to overcome barriers to learning.
- The expectations set by senior leaders for students' academic achievement, especially that of the lower attainers, are not always high enough. As a result, some students lose motivation and are at risk of underperforming.
- The leadership of English has not been strong enough over time to secure sustained good progress for all students. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is not of consistently high quality to ensure that all students develop the skills required to make good progress at Key Stage 4.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is over generous. However, senior leaders have accurately identified the actions necessary to ensure consistently good teaching and students' positive attitudes towards learning in all subjects.
- The school makes effective use of the pupil premium funding to improve students' attendance and to provide support from external agencies. In addition, the funding provides equipment needed to access learning and supports students' participation in trips and visits. This is part of the school's work to promote equality of opportunity. The gaps between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students and others in the school are narrowing. Nevertheless, this is not as rapid in English as it is in mathematics.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced at both key stages and meets all statutory requirements. The range of subjects meets students' needs well, with the result that almost all students move on to the next stage in education, employment or training. However, some students believe that the way in which classes are organised limits their opportunities to achieve at the highest levels.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum in English is currently under review. Planned revisions include opportunities for students to move on to more challenging work when they are ready to do so. However, these changes have yet to have an impact on improving students' progress at Key Stage 3.
- Senior leaders and governors do much to promote equal opportunities for students. This is because they have succeeded in establishing a calm and inclusive ethos in the school. Students and staff feel valued and respected, and know that their views are considered.
- The leadership of teaching is improved; training for staff is appropriately aligned to the school's development priorities. Where outcomes for students are less than good, leaders provide support to enable teachers to improve their skills. Governors have supported the headteacher to make difficult staffing decisions when the quality of teaching has not been good enough and salary increases are not recommended or awarded.
- The appointment of a second deputy headteacher and two new assistant headteachers has broadened the skills and experience of the senior leadership team. Additional appointments to associate senior leader posts have also enhanced the capacity of the team. This is strengthening the way in which the team leads and manages the school and holds others to account.
- Students receive careers information, advice and guidance of good quality, which help them to make appropriate choices for post-16 and post-18 employment, education or training. The strong relationships with local businesses and employers mean that students benefit from a range of opportunities, such as work experience placements and mock interviews, which prepare them very well for the world of work. Many secure high quality apprenticeships when they leave school.
- The school has improved communication with parents and every effort is taken to involve parents in their child's education. Almost all parents would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority regularly reviews the work of the school and makes recommendations for its improvement. School leaders have commissioned external consultants to challenge and support the school. This has resulted in changes to the Key Stage 3 English curriculum, the improved support for disadvantaged students and improved attendance.
- The school makes good use of the catch-up funding, which supports those students who join in Year 7 with low levels of literacy and numeracy, to develop their reading and mathematical skills. Most work securely at the expected level by the end of Year 7.
- The school's strong links with Bournemouth and Poole College and The Quay mean that leaders routinely check closely on the progress, behaviour and attendance of students attending part of their education off

site.

- The school puts the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of its work. The Rights Respecting School award recognises the very effective work to promote equality of opportunity and to prevent discriminatory behaviour and the use of derogatory language.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, together with a rich variety of extra-curricular activities, ensures that students are very accepting of difference and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Staff, prefects and members of the school parliament do much to promote good relations.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements effectively meet all current statutory requirements. The school follows child protection procedures meticulously. Key leaders, including governors, undertake regular training in safeguarding and child protection issues. All staff are familiar with the school's procedures to keep students safe. Risk assessments are in place for all visits, and for eventualities concerning the education provided by Bournemouth and Poole College and The Quay.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. The governing body has recently been reconstituted. There are now three governors' committees which closely oversee the work of the school. Each committee is made up of appropriately qualified and professionally experienced governors.
  - The school's expenditure is rigorously checked to ensure that financial resources are used for the educational benefit of students. The school currently has a substantial surplus budget. However, this money will be used to fund a number of site improvement projects, such as refurbishment of the science laboratories and the swimming pool.
  - Governors have undertaken training which enables them to analyse information about students' progress and attainment. They have a good understanding of the reasons for the decline in GCSE examination results in 2014. Each governor is now linked to a subject leader and this is helping to improve the way in which leaders at all levels are held to account.
  - Governors perform their statutory duties effectively. They are knowledgeable in checking safeguarding arrangements. Careful vetting prevents the employment of persons who are unsuitable to work with children.
  - Performance management arrangements are now rigorous. Teachers and leaders have objectives that match the priorities for school improvement. Governors have a good understanding of the impact of teaching on students' achievement and ensure that salary increases are only awarded when outcomes for students are good.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because attitudes to learning are too variable across subjects and key stages.
- Students report that they lose interest in learning when the tasks set by teachers do not inspire them to achieve well, and when expectations of them are not high enough. Some students in Key Stage 3 lose motivation when the targets set for their academic achievement are too low.
- In lessons, students usually respond to their teachers' instructions quickly. Learning is rarely interrupted by disruptive behaviour. However, students become passive when the pace of learning slows or when tasks are not well matched to their needs.
- Students behave well when moving around the school and at social times. They respond quickly to the warning bell at the end of break times and, despite the very large school site, most arrive promptly to lessons.
- Students are polite and courteous towards adults and towards each other. They are welcoming of visitors and are proud to be members of the school. There is very little sign of litter or graffiti.
- The school's behaviour records show a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions. Incidents of racist or homophobic behaviour are rare.
- Students who receive part of their education at Bournemouth and Poole College are kept safe, attend regularly and behave well. This is because they are interested in what they are learning and because any poor behaviour is quickly dealt with through close liaison between the college and the school.
- The school makes good use of short-term placements at The Quay to provide additional support for students who have behavioural difficulties. These students have a good rate of attendance and are kept safe. Most successfully reintegrate into the school.

- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Disadvantaged and vulnerable students attend as regularly as their peers. This is because very good use is made of the school mini-bus to collect reluctant attenders from home and bring them to school.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All students who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe when at school and this is endorsed by the views of almost all parents and staff.
- The school makes good use of personal development and information technology lessons to teach students how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Students are clear about how to manage the risks associated with the use of social networks and how these websites can be used for potential child sexual exploitation, bullying or intimidation.
- Bullying has been greatly reduced and now seldom happens. Most incidents are linked to use of social media in the community. Students say that when bullying does take place it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. This view is also held by the majority of parents.
- Students learn about different faiths and beliefs and how different cultures can enrich society. Key staff have been trained to recognise the signs of, for example, child sexual exploitation or of radicalisation and extremism, and great care is taken to identify and protect any at risk of being radicalised.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been consistently good enough to enable students to make good progress and to achieve well in all subjects.
- The teaching of English in Key Stage 3 is not consistently good enough to support students in developing the skills required to make good progress in Key Stage 4.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what some students can achieve. This limits students' aspirations, especially of the lower attainers.
- Many teachers use their strong subject knowledge to question students skilfully and to make them think deeply about what they are learning. This was especially evident in a Year 7 lesson on beliefs and values in which students explored the way in which those from different faiths might view the creation of a 'life gem'. However, this strength is not consistent across all subjects.
- When teachers plan work that inspires students to achieve their best they have very good attitudes towards learning. They are then interested in the lesson and have the confidence to try new things and to develop their skills. This was especially evident in a Year 8 lesson on the use of perspective in pop art. However, this good practice is not consistent across or within all subjects.
- Teachers' marking and feedback do not always precisely identify the steps that students need to take to correct, improve or extend their work. Marking is also sometimes irregular and infrequent. This results, on occasions, in repeated errors, uncompleted work or poor presentation.
- Not all teachers provide opportunities for students to reflect and act on their advice. The effect is that students do not consistently use their teachers' advice to extend or improve their work and this slows their progress.
- Teaching assistants work well with the students whom they support in lessons. They keep students on task and help them develop positive attitudes towards learning.
- The opportunities for students to apply their skills in literacy, reading and mathematics within other subjects are developing well. The school also makes good use of tutor time to help students to develop their skills in these subjects. In most lessons, students use subject-specific terminology accurately and with confidence.
- Students are encouraged to read widely and often. Students make good use of opportunities to read in lessons and for pleasure. Teachers often successfully use reading as an activity to settle students at the start of lessons and to prepare them for learning.
- Teachers regularly set homework in the different subjects. Most parents believe that their children receive appropriate homework for their age. However, students reported a decline in the amount of homework set as the current academic year has progressed.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- The proportion of students who attained five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has been lower than the national average for the last three years.
- In 2014, the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C was lower than average in a broad range of subjects. However, information provided by the school shows that standards are likely to rise in most subjects for the current students in Year 11 and Year 10.
- The proportion of students who made expected progress in English in 2014 was much lower than the national average; in mathematics, the proportion was similar to the national average. Information provided by the school shows that students currently on roll make more progress in mathematics than they do in English.
- The use of assessments when students join the school in Year 7 results, in some cases, in Key Stage 3 targets for academic attainment being set at levels lower than those attained by students at the end of Key Stage 2. Expectations of these lower-attaining students are not sufficiently high.
- Students who would benefit from a work-related curriculum are carefully selected and enrolled on courses at Bournemouth and Poole College. They make good progress and all gain qualifications which prepare them well for future employment.
- The progress of students with disabilities or those who have special educational needs has been in line with national averages since 2012. Such students who are currently on roll are making good progress because the support they receive is well matched to their individual needs. There have been very good improvements in these students' reading competencies and this is helping their learning in other subjects.
- The most-able students are set challenging targets for their academic achievement. The result is that they make good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students attained three quarters of a grade lower in English than others in the school, and one grade lower in mathematics. Compared to students nationally, the gap was one and a third grades lower in both English and mathematics.
- Pastoral leaders have taken effective action to ensure that support for disadvantaged students helps them to maintain good attendance. Communication with the parents of disadvantaged students has also been improved. Consequently, the gaps between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers are narrowing. However, this is happening more quickly in mathematics than in English.
- In 2014, the school entered a very small number of students early for their GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. These were very vulnerable students who were at risk of not completing their courses.

**The sixth form provision****requires improvement**

- Achievement in the sixth form has been variable over recent years. There has been no clear pattern of improvement. Students' performance in any one subject may vary considerably from one year to the next. For this reason, students do not achieve consistently well over time.
- Most teaching in the sixth form is improving and is now good. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to engage students in their learning and to motivate them to achieve well. A good example was seen in a Year 12 history lesson in which students debated whether or not the 1861 Emancipation Edict defrauded the peasants. Students' progress in the sixth form is therefore improving.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students have very positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy their experience of school. Many take part in the broad range of extra-curricular activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, which helps to develop their leadership skills.
- Sixth form students routinely act as positive role models for younger students. They represent their peers through the school parliament and have been influential in helping governors and senior leaders to consider students' views about how the school can be improved.
- Students in the sixth form, as in Years 7 to 11, are kept safe when at school. They are well supported and have no hesitation in sharing with staff any concerns that they may have.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students well. This, together with effective careers advice and guidance, ensures that students are well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training. The number of students who gain places at universities is increasing, and many others move on to high quality apprenticeships or employment with local businesses. This is helping to enhance the school's links with the local community.
- Very few students finished Year 12 or Year 13 in 2014 without a course or a pathway to follow.

- The new leader of the sixth form has put in place effective strategies designed to ensure that students have a very positive educational experience and achieve the highest standards. However, these strategies have yet to have a full impact on the outcomes for sixth form students.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113907
<b>Local authority</b>	Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	461801

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,840
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	250
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynne Young
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fan Heafield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8–9 December 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 666988
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