

The Hereford Academy

Marlbrook Road, Redhill, Hereford HR2 7NG

Inspection dates

18–19 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school with serious weaknesses

- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate because GCSE results are weak and below that of other schools nationally. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is still too low.
- Not enough pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress, especially in science and mathematics, so they do not achieve the qualifications they should.
- The achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy are not closing rapidly enough.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Expectations are sometimes too low and lessons do not challenge all groups of pupils.
- Subject leaders do not check closely enough that all teachers are applying agreed approaches to the assessment of pupils' work.
- Not all teachers accurately check how well pupils are doing, or use this information well enough to plan work that helps pupils improve.
- Some pupils lack motivation and misbehave in a few lessons where teachers' planning and management of the class are weak.
- The curriculum lacks breadth in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly with respect to understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in modern Britain.
- The 16 to 19 provision requires improvement because not all learners make good progress. They do not benefit from a wide enough range of activities to enrich their learning and promote their personal development fully.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim Principal shows dynamic leadership and has established a clear direction for the academy.
- Governors are committed to making sure that the academy serves its community. They are well informed and challenge the academy thoroughly.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developing securely at Key Stage 3 because of well-planned provision across subjects.
- Weak teaching and leadership are being tackled vigorously and subject leaders share fully the Principal's vision and ambitions for improvement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour around the academy and attitudes towards one another are usually respectful.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve achievement, so that pupils make consistently good or better progress in Years 7 to 11 across all subjects, and at all levels, by making sure that:
 - all leaders and teachers use the agreed assessment processes, in Years 7 to 11, to collect accurate information and use it consistently to check pupils' progress against their starting points
 - subject leaders and teachers understand what constitutes good and better achievement, so that they can check pupils' work correctly, predict accurately what each pupil can achieve and encourage them to strive for the best.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good across the academy by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan motivating and challenging work for all pupils, showing sufficient flexibility to change planned activities in lessons to meet pupils' changing needs.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including the leadership of the 16 to 19 provision by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders check the consistent application of the academy's assessment policy
 - broadening the academy's curriculum to better promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is recommended that an external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium be commissioned to identify how the provision for disadvantaged pupils can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The interim Principal is aspirational for all pupils and staff and in a short time has transformed the climate for learning within the academy. He shows determined commitment and skills to improve the quality of teaching and increase examination results for pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders share the Principal's ambition to secure more rapid improvements in teaching and outcomes. They are, however, still developing the skills and confidence needed to use information about pupils' underperformance and identify weaknesses in teaching.
- More work is still to be done by senior and middle leaders in establishing a process for the whole school to assess how well pupils are doing in line with new curriculum requirements, especially at Key Stage 3.
- Not all subject leaders and teachers are accurate in checking how well pupils are doing. As a result, pupils who are not achieving according to their abilities are not always identified quickly and given the help they need.
- Academy leaders recognise that the way they use the pupil premium funding has not yet had sufficient impact in rapidly closing gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates, although gaps are narrowing slowly. Consequently, the academy's work to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well requires improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement because the current programme does not explore cultural and faith diversity in enough detail. Nonetheless, the promotion of British values of democracy, equality, tolerance and respect is included in the programme, and pupils interviewed during the inspection were aware of these and could give examples.
- The academy's curriculum has been reviewed and now meets pupils' needs. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have a broad and balanced curriculum. In Key Stage 4, changes to the range of academic and work-related courses on offer, work experience and increased small-group work out of lessons are helping to promote pupils' positive behaviour and welfare.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to support the progress in English and mathematics of pupils with low attainment on joining the school. Pupils' reading skills are improving in response to a programme to promote their reading and writing skills, particularly in Year 7.
- A range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities exists for pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, including visits to places of interest, and visits to the academy by police and healthcare professionals. This emphasises the importance placed by the academy on good relations and community spirit.
- Staff and pupils work well together to promote strong relationships and to prevent any form of discriminatory behaviour. The behaviour policy has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and conduct.
- The academy sponsor, the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust, has quickly made good use of expert consultants and advisers to support the academy's improvement. This helps to make sure that leaders keep an accurate picture of how well the academy is doing.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - has been re-structured following an external review
 - ensures governors are highly skilled and knowledgeable about educational matters
 - holds leaders to account rigorously for the achievement and progress of pupils
 - does not accept leaders' evaluations without question but checks through regular, focused visits by governors to the academy, which are carefully recorded
 - has secured external partnerships and advisory support, which have been critical in bringing about the improvements in the academy so far
 - takes its statutory duties seriously and puts in place rigorous processes to review the interim Principal's performance
 - receives and scrutinises information about the performance targets set for teachers.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet requirements. Safer recruitment, the Prevent duty and other relevant training to keep pupils safe have been received by staff and governors. School leaders quickly identify any pupil at risk of harm. The academy engages well with a range of partners and parents to respond as necessary within the academy and local community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the academy. Although teachers know and understand pupils' individual needs, their teaching strategies are not always adapted carefully to suit them. This means pupils can lose interest and become demotivated, and it slows down how well they are doing.
- Although teaching has improved since the last inspection, senior leaders know that there is more to do to reduce the inconsistencies that remain in teaching in some subjects.
- Teachers do not always set work that is at the right level for some pupils because they do not use assessment information as well as they could. Work is sometimes not hard enough and pupils do not have enough opportunities across the curriculum to demonstrate skills and knowledge appropriate for their age.
- The accuracy of assessments is variable in some lessons. This is another reason why work is sometimes not at the right level for pupils and why previous academy predictions for Year 11 results have been inaccurate. However, this is getting better, particularly in Year 11, as a result of leaders' actions to support teachers through checking the marking of work in preparation for GCSE. Nonetheless, the academy's assessment policy needs greater clarity at Key Stage 3 so that it has an impact on improved results for those groups also.
- Pupils in some subjects, including science, do not always know how to improve their work because some teachers do not always follow academy leaders' expectations with respect to marking.
- Teaching in modern foreign languages also requires improvement. Not enough use was made of the correct language as a means of communication in lessons to help pupils use the foreign language in real-life situations.
- Teaching is increasingly good in English, physical education, art, and performing arts subjects. For example, pupils spoke very highly about music and physical education lessons, saying that teacher support in class is good, with teachers working closely alongside the pupils who need the most help. In a Year 10 physical education lesson, motivation and participation were of the highest levels because of clear instructions that enabled all pupils to do as well as they could.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving strongly because academy leaders have provided a good level of support. In addition to the usual timetabled lessons, some of these pupils benefit from specially targeted support in small groups within a dedicated area. Pupils say that this makes a big difference to their learning and motivates them to attend lessons regularly.
- Teachers take control of their own professional development and feel well equipped because their training is more of a team activity with senior leaders, and is linked carefully to the improvement needs of the academy.
- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is good and makes pupils want to learn. Teaching assistants and other adults are very well prepared for lessons and employ effective ways to support pupils that make a difference for them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is insufficiently prominent in the curriculum and the broader life of the academy. In particular, pupils do not have a well-developed understanding of the different cultures and faiths in modern Britain, although the agreed syllabus in religious education at Key Stage 3 now addresses this area.
- Pupils interviewed said that they know how to keep safe on the internet and understand the risks associated with social networking.
- The academy teaches pupils about the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of sexual health. There are clear and robust procedures for the appointment of staff and the checking of visitors to the school.
- Pupils feel safe and cared for in the academy. Vulnerable pupils are supported well to think positively, deal with the difficulties in their lives and make progress.

- Incidents of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, are infrequent. Pupil ambassadors play their part in supporting pupils. Such incidents are dealt with seriously and quickly by staff. Pupils are aware of an appropriate adult whom they could go to if they need help.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because disruption is evident in a few lessons. In these instances, insufficient planning of learning tasks and unclear explanations by the teacher caused pupils to lose interest and engage in off-task behaviour.
- Punctuality to lessons is variable and lateness is not always challenged by teachers, resulting in the loss of valuable learning time.
- Behaviour around the academy, including break- and lunchtime, is orderly and calm. A strong presence by staff, with well-established relationships, encourages respectful and positive attitudes from pupils.
- A new behaviour code in the academy has been received well by pupils, although fixed-term exclusions have risen as a consequence. Work to support the small minority of pupils who disregard academy rules is appreciated by them because they are given help to get back on track.
- The support given to vulnerable pupils is explicit and effective. Also, support for emotional and mental health needs is good and leads to very positive attitudes and behaviour by pupils.
- Pupils' punctuality to school and attendance at the academy has improved and is now in line with national averages. The attendance of those pupils who follow individual learning pathways is also improving.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE A*–C grades, including English and mathematics, was low. This was a legacy of poor progress made by that group from low attainment scores when they started at the academy. This represents inadequate progress overall.
- Achievement in English and mathematics has not improved quickly enough. In 2015, a lower proportion of pupils achieved grades of A*–C at GCSE than nationally in both subjects, although the proportion achieving those grades in mathematics improved a little. However, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*–C in English and mathematics together was similar to that achieved in 2014 and too low.
- Weaker results in other subject areas such as science, history and modern foreign languages, which previously had been stronger, also contributed to the inadequate overall outcomes for Year 11 pupils in 2015.
- The academy's own predictions of the grades pupils were capable of achieving in the GCSE examinations in 2015 were inaccurate.
- Disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by additional funding from the pupil premium, have not made similar rates of progress in English and mathematics as other pupils in the academy. The progress gap in English widened at GCSE in 2015 and narrowed in mathematics. In both cases, gaps were still wider than the national average. This meant that they were not catching up with their classmates quickly enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make generally better progress than other groups of pupils in the academy because of the good quality of support that they receive in and out of class.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils at the academy increased at GCSE in 2015, but their performance in English and mathematics was still below national averages, and very few pupils gained the highest grades at GCSE.
- Across the academy, the progress of current cohorts of pupils is improving. There are marked strengths in pupils' learning and progress in sport and the creative arts.
- From low starting points on entry to the academy, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are now improving securely, and supporting their improved progress in other subjects. In Key Stage 3 in particular, pupils' skills in reading, writing and numeracy are improving because of well-planned, relevant support that focuses on their needs and abilities. However, checking of progress is still at an early stage of development.
- Low-attaining pupils following the specially tailored curriculum of individual learning pathways alongside GCSE in English and mathematics do well. Reports on their work show that they are increasing their skills and improving their attitudes and behaviour. This is because courses are well chosen and appropriate to their needs and abilities.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Leadership and management in the 16 to 19 provision require improvement because there is no formal process in place to check the accuracy of learners' assessments and to ensure that they are making the progress they should.
- The range of academic courses at A and AS level available to learners is small and learner progress is variable. Pass rates are high but few attain the highest grades at A* to B.
- The large majority of learners follow vocational courses at Levels 2 and 3 and make at least the progress expected. Learners do particularly well in BTEC in sport, and health and social care. In 2015, one third of learners achieved at least one distinction grade in sport, whilst two thirds of learners achieved distinctions in health and social care. All learners passed in both subjects.
- Not enough learners are making the progress they should from re-sitting English and mathematics to reach the required grade C at GCSE. Until this year, provision for this has been variable. Recent improvements to the support are, however, making a difference.
- Teaching requires improvement because its overall quality is too variable. Although strong practice was observed in photography and GCSE English in Year 12, shortcomings were evident in some other lessons in the pace of learning, degree of challenge and quality of pupils' engagement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who enter the 16 to 19 provision are very well supported and are particularly successful in their courses.
- The proportion of learners staying on to study in Year 13 has increased since the last inspection. A good proportion of the most-able learners were successful in securing university places in 2015.
- Because of the separate nature of the 16 to 19 provision from the main academy, opportunities for all learners to develop fully their personal, social and employability skills are not planned systematically. Impartial careers guidance is available to all learners, but those who take up this opportunity are too few. There are gaps in the overall range of enrichment activities, visits to appropriate places and suitable visitors coming into the academy to enhance learner aspirations and personal development.
- Work-experience placements are relevant and well chosen. They add value to the courses and provide learners with a good experience of the world of work.

School details

Unique reference number	135662
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10001615

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Sponsored academy
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	779
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	173
Appropriate authority	Bishop Anthony Educational Trust
Chair	Bruce Freeman
Principal	Patrick Ottley-O'Connor
Telephone number	01432 373570
Website	www.theherefordacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@theherefordacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 November 2013

Information about this school

- Hereford Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- In November 2015, after a period of consultation and discussion, the academy sponsor formally changed to the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust serving the Hereford Diocesan Board of Education.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding given to schools to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The academy uses no external alternative provision.
- When the academy was last inspected under section 5 in November 2013, it was subject to special measures. It subsequently had five monitoring inspections, the last of which took place in July 2015.
- The substantive Principal resigned in September 2015, and was replaced with the current interim Principal. A new Chair of the local Governing Body was appointed by the sponsor at the same time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of lessons, of which nine were jointly observed with senior leaders. They also visited an assembly and tutor time.
- Pupils' work was sampled informally in lessons. In addition, work from Year 10 and Year 11 and the 16 to 19 provision was sampled separately.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents, including the academy's own information on the progress of current pupils, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of the local governing body, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.
- Meetings were held with pupils across Years 7 to 13, as well as informal meetings at break- and lunchtime, and with members of the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust and the local governing body. Discussions also took place with senior leaders, subject leaders and staff with pastoral care responsibilities.
- An inspector listened to pupils reading in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Inspectors evaluated the responses of 15 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of the views of 19 members of the academy's staff through the inspection questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Huw Bishop, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Herminder Channa	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Morris	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

