

Hassenbrook Academy

Hassenbrook Road, Stanford-le-Hope SS17 0NS

Inspection dates 19–20 January 216

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' achievement in English is too low. Many pupils make very little progress in Key Stage 3 and some regress. This impacts on many subjects across the academy.
- The way that leaders check on the quality of teaching is inconsistent across subjects and classes. Consequently, they do not know how effective all teaching is.
- Disadvantaged pupils do much worse than other pupils, especially in English, where the gaps in their achievement show no signs of narrowing.
- The behaviour of a small proportion of pupils in each year group is very poor. Pupils say that their lessons are disrupted on a regular basis.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is too low.
- Leaders do not monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Little is known by leaders about how well these pupils are supported.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress is inaccurate in some subjects. In some cases, pupils' books have not been marked since the beginning of the academic year.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in some subjects, including mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, art and technology.
- Pupils are very positive about the teaching in these, and some other, subjects.
- Governors are committed to the academy's improvement and understand the challenges ahead.
- The headteacher has managed a significant reduction in staffing costs. Many staff are new to the academy.
- The academy's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is effective.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by:
 - routinely checking the impact of all interventions, especially in English
 - narrowing the gap between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Improve outcomes in English for all pupils by:
 - ensuring that leaders check on the quality of learning rigorously in all classes
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments, especially in Key Stage 3
 - make better use of the national curriculum programmes of study to build on the work that pupils have done in Key Stage 2
 - ensure that all teachers provide good role models for pupils in the way that they speak and write in standard English.
- Improve the leadership of special educational needs with urgency so that:
 - leaders track and monitor the progress that this group of pupils make
 - accurate assessment data are gathered and evaluated regularly
 - all interventions and support programmes are monitored to check their impact.
- Ensure that lessons and learning are not disrupted by poor behaviour, and that the academy is a calm and orderly environment for all pupils
- Make use of existing good practice in the monitoring of teaching to ensure that all subjects and departments are equally effective in this area.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders at several levels have not been effective in making improvements. Senior leaders have not ensured that the quality of learning in key areas, including English and special educational needs, has been monitored effectively. The work of middle leaders is inconsistent: some very good practice exists alongside that which is extremely weak.
- The leadership of special educational needs is in need of urgent review. Leaders in this area found it very difficult to provide inspectors with evidence that they understood how this group of pupils are doing in the academy. They had no faith in the accuracy of the assessment information they have, and presented no strategic solutions to the very poor progress that these pupils are making. Of the 100 pupils in this group, less than 10 are making the progress expected of them in English and mathematics.
- Leaders gather significant amounts of information about pupils' attendance and punctuality. The analysis of this data is weak, and leaders in this area do not demonstrate an awareness of the impact of their own work on raising levels of attendance. In particular, leaders' work to raise the levels of attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been ineffective.
- The responsibility of monitoring the quality of teaching has been delegated to departmental leaders, overseen by three 'Directors of Achievement'. The quality and frequency of information varies significantly: some of the information gathered, for example in art and design, is of a high quality. In contrast, little information has been gathered about English, and that which exists is of little use as it is overly generous. Senior leaders have not maintained a rigorous overview of these leaders and this has allowed such inconsistency to develop.
- The impact of such variance in the monitoring of teaching undermines senior leaders' abilities to plan strategically and evaluate the academy with accuracy. Poor and overly generous self-evaluation and assessment has prevented resources and support from being deployed to where it is most urgently needed.
- Academy leaders undertake scheduled lesson observations of each teacher three times per year. These observations do not take enough account of pupils' learning over time and provide only a snapshot of what teaching is like. There is no evidence that leaders look at pupils' work during these observations and therefore too little is known about what learning is like when leaders are not observing. Recommendations for improvements are brief and generic and are not followed up quickly enough.
- The academy's intake has diminished in recent years and, although the current year 7 is much larger, this has had a serious impact on funding. The headteacher has led a lengthy and difficult re-structuring of the academy staffing to match the available funds. This process reduced the size of the staff considerably and presented challenges to maintaining a broad curriculum. This has been achieved successfully, and the range of subjects on offer to pupils is still broad, varied and matches their needs and interests. The academy had anticipated this, and had saved money to cope with the change. This money has largely been used now. Leaders recognise that the academy will continue to face financial challenges in the coming year.
- The headteacher made the improvement of behaviour her key priority when she was appointed just over two years ago. Despite the remaining challenges, pupils and staff say that the situation is a great deal better now than it was at that time. She also set about changing the ethos and culture in the academy, and here too there have been real successes: the pupils' positive personal development is at the heart of many of the curricular changes that have occurred. More needs to be done, but progress has clearly been made.
- The academy's programme for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well planned and popular with pupils. The headteacher has brought a much more outward-looking approach to the academy, which includes broadening pupils' understanding of modern British values through visits, trips and visitors, alongside structured lessons.
- Some middle leaders, including those in mathematics, science and technology, have developed highly effective strategies for monitoring learning, and how teaching impacts on this, in their areas. Individual teachers' strengths and where they need more support are known well because these leaders regard all of their time in the academy as an opportunity to find out how well their teams are doing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has recently become much more aware of the school's weaknesses and has started to monitor these more carefully

- has worked with the headteacher to appoint an external consultant with a proven track record of impact to provide leadership in English
- is committed to the academy and its ethos of inclusion. Governors are keen to offer high quality opportunities to the young people of the local community and beyond. Several 'go the extra mile' to support pupils. On four days each week, one governor teaches pupils who are struggling with literacy. Another is promoting engineering skills and offering apprenticeships for pupils.
- ensures that performance management procedures are robust. Teachers who meet their annual performance targets are eligible for pay progression.
- oversees safeguarding procedures effectively.
- is aware of the deployment of the pupil premium grant but is not robust enough in holding leaders to account for how effective the use of the funding is in bringing about improvements.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The academy follows the required procedures to recruit and check on the suitability of all staff. Teachers and support staff are appropriately trained in child protection. Pupils who are vulnerable or at risk are well supported: the academy works effectively with outside agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The teaching of English is weak. Pupils make too little progress in writing, reading and oracy. This impacts on the quality of their work across many other subjects, where these skills are critical.
- Too little account of pupils' previous learning is taken when pupils enter the academy in Year 7 in some subjects. This means that, instead of building on what they have learned already, pupils waste time repeating learning and making little progress. This can be seen in some English books, where pupils in Year 7 started the year working at a higher standard than they are currently at. The same pupils are making good progress in science, where expectations are much higher. Similarly, pupils in Year 8 who did well in English at primary school are working at a lower level now than they were in Year 6.
- The English curriculum has not been carefully enough planned in the past. This has frustrated pupils and led to many saying that the subject does not interest them. This is because they have read the same texts or plays several times and in different years. One pupil reported that her class had read 'Of Mice and Men' three times with three different teachers in three different year groups.
- The underachievement at Key Stage 3 has resulted in low expectations of pupils from some teachers. Because the quality of pupils' reading and writing are very low by the time they reach Year 10, teachers do not expect them to achieve well, and set them targets that are too low. Instances of this were heard during the inspection. One teacher, for example, suggested that pupils would be better off simply taking five GCSEs as they would cope better. This would seriously disadvantage Hassenbrook pupils when they came to apply for further education, training or apprenticeships and is unnecessary: many pupils who attend the academy are capable of achieving very good outcomes by the time they leave.
- Teachers' assessment is inconsistent. The academy's feedback policy is not implemented by all teachers and this variation means that some teachers are very aware of how well pupils are doing while others have little understanding of this: some teachers provide pupils with helpful and encouraging feedback, while others have not looked at their work for over a term.
- The assessment of pupils' work in English is inaccurate, especially in Key Stage 3, where teachers have not received support to understand new assessment procedures. As a result, poor rates of progress are masked by assessment information that suggests pupils are doing very well. No checks have been made to ensure that this information is secure.
- Not all teachers provide good role models for pupils in the way that they speak and write in standard English. This is preventing pupils from developing key communication skills that will support them in their next stage of education, training or employment.
- In some parts of the academy, teaching is very strong. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, for example, because their learning is clearly broken down and tracked carefully. In technology, teaching is exceptionally effective because lessons are planned that match the needs of the pupils, learning is clearly sequenced and pupils are highly motivated.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Many are developing the skills required to be a successful learner, but an equal number do not consistently adopt positive attitudes in lessons: they choose when to be motivated and interested, often on the basis of how effective the teaching is.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep safe, and they understand the risks associated with, for example, social media. Pupils understand how bullying can take different forms. Pupils report that they feel confident in approaching teaching and support staff if they need help.
- A range of extra-curricular opportunities are available, including sports, to enable pupils to develop their interests and improve their health. The academy is the home to many netball clubs and encourages participation at every opportunity.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Pupils told inspectors that their lessons are disrupted by a small minority of their peers on a daily basis.
- The academy's own records show that the incidence of poor behaviour increased in the autumn term. For some year groups, it more than tripled over this period of time.
- Many pupils in Year 7 do not enjoy the boisterous behaviour of older pupils in corridors. Some are shocked by the swearing and shouting that they experience.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work vary enormously. Some pupils' exercise books are very well kept, and there is evidence of real pride in their work. In contrast, some books are untidy and have graffiti and scribbles amongst the work, which is poorly presented. The same pupils often show little interest in their work and are reluctant to invest any effort in it. Some teachers try very hard with these pupils and are successful. An English teacher, with very little teaching experience, has established very effective relationships with a class of pupils in Key Stage 4 who have made very little progress in the subject in the past. This class is now trying hard and almost all of the pupils say that they now enjoy their English lessons. The pace of their learning has increased significantly.
- Despite being inadequate, pupils are certain that things have improved in the recent past, and point to the impact of the headteacher as the key feature. They also know that some teachers manage behaviour very well and these are the lessons that are the most popular.
- Pupils' overall attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly in line with the national level for secondary schools. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has similarly decreased. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, however, is much worse. On average, disadvantaged pupils miss one day of their education every two weeks.
- The academy has altered its approach to exclusion and makes use of a wider range of strategies to support those pupils who are at risk of exclusion. This includes sending them to work at a neighbouring school in a dedicated unit for a period of time. The rates of exclusion rose last year but have dropped dramatically this year, and are now in line with national levels.
- The behaviour of those pupils who attend alternative provision is satisfactory when they are away from the academy.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils' achievement in several subjects is limited by their ability to read and write well. This impacts most clearly on the proportions of pupils who attain the higher grades of A and A* at GCSE in subjects where writing is required: far fewer pupils gain these grades in history, geography or English than other pupils nationally. In subjects which do not require these skills as much, such as mathematics, the sciences, art and design and modern foreign languages, pupils are much more successful in gaining higher grades.
- The poor progress that pupils make in developing these key skills begins in Year 7. Too many pupils fail to make progress because the work is too easy. Pupils are taught concepts such as alliteration and personification as though they are new concepts. These are elements of the Key Stage 2 curriculum that pupils will have encountered at several stages in primary school.
- Pupils' starting points are generally below those found typically in Year 7. In 2015, however, the Year 11

pupils had started the academy with broadly average standards in English and mathematics. They did well in mathematics and almost one third made more than expected progress. In contrast, less than half of pupils made expected progress in English and just over one tenth of them made better than expected progress. These outcomes are well below the national averages.

- Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes were much lower than other pupils in 2015. In both mathematics and English, disadvantaged pupils were a grade behind others. The predicted outcomes for Year 11 in 2016 indicate that the gap is closing in mathematics. In other year groups, the gaps in mathematics are narrowing as pupils progress through the academy. In English, the picture is unclear because senior leaders have little faith in the accuracy of the assessment data.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making very poor progress. In 2015, the attainment of Year 11 pupils in this group was very low and they made much less progress than their national counterparts. The current picture is no better, and interventions and support are having little impact on achievement.
- The picture across the whole curriculum is one of contrast. From low starting points, pupils make good progress and are in line with the national average in several subjects, including some that will have an important impact on their future life-chances. Additionally, initiatives to improve teaching and raise standards have been successful and are breathing new life into some subjects. Pupils are very keen to sing the praise of the music department. Here, they are being inspired by a teacher whose enthusiasm and technical abilities are changing the profile of the subject in the academy. Similarly, in art and technology, pupils who are reluctant to concentrate and apply themselves in other subjects are doing just that because, they say, 'the teaching is great'.

School details

Unique reference number	137364
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10001867

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	503
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Burr
Headteacher	Michelle Bamber
Telephone number	01375 671566
Website	www.hassenbrook.org.uk
Email address	admin@hassenbrook.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 December 2013

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- Around 17% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is below the national average.
- A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs or an education and health plan is average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards.
- The academy works in partnership with Action Learning to offer alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons or parts of lessons. They evaluated pupils' work in lessons and outside them.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, four members of the governing body, departmental leaders and other teachers to discuss their work. They also met with pupils from Key Stages 3 and 4 formally to discuss their experiences in the academy. Additionally, inspectors spoke with around 100 pupils at lunchtime to understand how they felt about behaviour in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors also took account of 64 responses to a staff questionnaire issued during the inspection.
- Inspectors spent time observing pupils' behaviour in and around the academy, at lunchtimes, at the start of the day and during transition between lessons.
- Inspectors evaluated the academy's documentation, including self-evaluation records, improvement planning, assessment information, governors' minutes, and safeguarding systems and records.

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