

# Pool Hayes Arts and Community School

Castle Drive, Willenhall WV12 4QZ

## Inspection dates

6–7 October 2015

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few students gain five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. Current students are reaching higher standards in some subject areas but it is not consistent across the curriculum and there is still catch-up work needed to cover gaps from earlier years.
- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics is well below the national average.
- Students, particularly those who start the school with average ability, do not make as much progress as other students nationally.
- Although teaching is improving and there is no evidence of any inadequate teaching, some teaching does not support students in making consistently good progress. In these lessons, activities are too easy or teachers allow students to work too slowly, limiting the pace of learning.
- Leaders have put in place the structures and systems to drive improvement and monitor the work of the school. However, actions taken to improve teaching have yet to deliver consistently good teaching or secure good progress for all students.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff, students, parents and governors recognise the energy, enthusiasm and transformational vision that the new headteacher has brought to the school.
- The school has a positive welcoming ethos where students feel safe and enjoy their learning.
- Students work very well with their peers, demonstrating trusting, supportive relationships where they are able to help each other to improve their work.
- The sixth form is good. Students make excellent progress on vocational courses and standards on A-level courses are improving rapidly.

## Full report

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

- Ensure teaching consistently enables all students, particularly those of average ability, to make rapid progress through:
  - strengthening the school's approach to planning by providing activities that challenge students to work and think hard to complete them
  - ensuring that all marking gives students useful guidance on how to improve their work and learn from their mistakes
  - making use of all available learning time in lessons, limiting the time spent on easier activities, so keeping the pace of learning high
  - asking students questions that require more thoughtful, detailed answers.
- Improve standards of achievement, particularly in mathematics, through:
  - accurately evaluating which interventions have been most successful with different groups of students and repeating those which have worked well
  - helping students to take greater responsibility for successfully completing their own work by developing skills in, for example, reflection and resilience.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher has rapidly created confidence in his vision for the school. Morale among staff and students is high. He has been highly effective in identifying the existing weaknesses in the school and putting in place the structures and systems that allow rapid school improvement to take place. Actions to improve teaching, behaviour and achievement are underway and considerable efforts have been made to improve the state of the buildings and improve communication with parents.
- Leaders have made significant progress in improving the quality of teaching. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and a programme of coaching and individual support is in place for teachers who need to improve the impact of their work.
- Senior leaders and governors have carefully managed limited resources to put in place a rapid programme of improvements to the building. This has led to improved teaching spaces and increased students' respect for their school buildings.
- Leaders have placed considerable emphasis on ensuring that disadvantaged students receive the full benefit of the additional government pupil premium funding. Last year, resources for older students were targeted on providing academic coaches and subject-specific revision activities and the impact is evident in the better outcomes achieved by these students.
- Rapid changes have been put in place to ensure that all students can access a suitably broad and enriching curriculum. The school offers more opportunities to study a language or triple science, while sustaining some vocational provision for those students who find this a more useful and appropriate pathway.
- The curriculum is enriched by themed days and opportunities to participate in music and drama performances or numerous sports teams. During the inspection, world food week was celebrated by an inspiring group of students competing for a local 'MasterChef' award.
- The headteacher has prioritised building stronger links with parents. Parents value the regular information which they receive about their children's progress. Parents are welcomed into school for a number of focused year-group events and the website is regularly updated with the school's achievements.
- A new assessment framework allows leaders to gather more timely information on students' progress. Leaders now analyse outcomes for different groups of students, for example, disadvantaged students, or the most able, and seek to put in place suitable interventions to support further progress. The interventions put in place over the last academic year had varying degrees of success with different groups of students. Leaders recognise that further development of this approach is necessary, particularly to support rapid progress for middle-ability students.
- The school's work on targeting underachievement has been most successful in the sixth form where early identification and rapid remedial action has led to a rapid improvement in outcomes and students happily commenting that 'teachers are constantly on our backs'.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - has undergone considerable restructuring alongside the arrival of the new headteacher and now has a committee structure that allows governors to closely monitor and challenge the work of senior leaders
  - shares the vision of the headteacher for a rapidly improving school with high expectations of better outcomes for future students
  - is committed to changing things that don't work well
  - knows the school very well, participates in many school activities and effectively carries out its statutory duties.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make sure the safety and well-being of students is a priority. Staff have undergone all necessary training and students and their parents describe the school as a safe place.
- The school has worked closely with the ATT academy chain this year in preparation for a likely conversion to an academy within the trust later this academic year. Academy representatives have supported the school to provide external validation of the quality of teaching and provided additional support in safeguarding, new technologies and assessment.

- The local authority has recognised the progress made by the headteacher but has continued to provide targeted support this year. This effective support has included help for leaders in managing a complex staffing restructuring, monitoring the impact of the school's actions, leading a review of governance and supporting school reviews.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons and series of lessons that provide all students with challenging activities, so limiting the progress they make.
- Where teaching is weaker, the planned activities do not interest students or help them remember key points for future lessons.
- Teachers consistently make considerable effort to consolidate students' understanding and link current learning to work they have done before through frequent questioning. However, there are too few questions that require students to think deeply or provide a higher level response.
- Students, although willing to work hard and complete tasks given, are still very dependent on their teachers to guide them through their work.
- All teachers have a class support plan for each of their teaching groups which highlights the additional needs of students in their class. This is a useful step in encouraging teachers to understand the wide range of learning needs within their classes. However, teachers are yet to build on this information to plan lessons that ensure students with different needs receive the support or the challenge they require to consistently make good progress over time.
- All teachers use a common lesson planning cycle known as 'Plan, Do, Review'. This is consistently in place in all lessons and encourages teachers to check students learning after each activity.
- In the best lessons, marking is an integral part of the learning and helps students identify what they have done well and in which areas they need to improve. It reinforces what has been learnt in the lesson and helps students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses.
- At other times, although all staff are following the school marking policy, comments are more generic and have little impact on making students work differently and learn from their mistakes.
- The school's strategy of peer- and self-assessment is used widely in many subject areas, often to good effect. In a graphic products lesson, students were confident in reviewing the work of their peers and advising them on how they could improve it.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants who provide encouragement and advice for students to manage their learning without taking over and doing it for them. They skilfully provide both emotional and academic support for vulnerable students.
- Students were able to demonstrate excellent group work skills in number of subjects, including creative subjects like drama and music, where they clearly enjoyed the opportunity to work together.
- School leaders recognise the importance of teaching specific learning skills and the Year 7 'learning to learn' course provides students with explicit support in skills such as notetaking and summarising.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** are good

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good.
- Students feel safe as a result of strong pastoral care and a zero tolerance policy towards any form of bullying. Students have been taught about the risks of using social media and know how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Students are well supported in making the right decisions about their future careers. Year 11 students particularly valued the advice and support from their school careers advisor and commented on the impartial support they received in making the decision about the best place to continue their education.
- The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a strength of the school.

- Understanding what it means to be British is promoted well: in displays around the school, activities in lessons and wider enrichment sessions, and through the school website. Students, from a predominantly White British background, are encouraged to be tolerant and to understand and celebrate the values of different cultures.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students conduct themselves well. They are polite, respectful and take a pride in their appearance. They look after school buildings and behave sensibly in very busy corridors and stairwells. They are confident and happy to talk about the improvements in their school.
- Students work well together and care about each other.
- Attendance has improved in the last year and is now broadly in line with national averages. The school has invested in additional staff to support improved attendance and has been successful in improving the attendance of some key groups, including disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- There has been an increase in the number of permanent exclusions as the new headteacher sets and enforces acceptable standards of behaviour. Students understand this and welcome the removal of some of the naughtiest students from their lessons.
- Although students behave well in the majority of their lessons, they require clear boundaries from teachers to support this. Where teaching is weaker or lessons are taken by temporary cover staff, students' behaviour can slip and some students disrupt the learning of others.
- The attainment, behaviour and well-being of the small group of students that are educated at an off-site unit are checked weekly by staff at the school and the leaders provide additional support if students fall behind with their work.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Students do not make the expected, or better than expected, levels of progress in English and mathematics. These differences are particularly evident for middle-ability students in mathematics where, in 2014 and 2015, progress for these students was significantly below expectations.
- Observations of the work of current students indicate that, in some subjects, students are still not making the rapid progress required to catch up on earlier gaps. School tracking data indicates variation between subjects and year groups, with younger students making the most rapid progress.
- The most-able students do not make the rapid progress made by similar students nationally.
- Overall standards, as measured by the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics by the end of Year 11, are below national levels and have shown little evidence of improvement in the last three years.
- Disadvantaged students have received considerable additional support in the last year. As a result, the difference in their attainment and that of other students has closed to half a grade in English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those in the attached resource base, receive targeted support from well-trained teaching assistants and benefit from specialist provision in the 'hub'. As a result, these students make good progress at the school.
- There has been a considerable improvement in the attainment of students across a number of subjects, including history, Spanish and geography, as a result of effective programmes to improve the quality of teaching.

### **16 to 19 study programmes**

### **are good**

- Leadership and management of the sixth form is good. Leaders have high expectations and demonstrate a strong commitment to reduce incidences of failure. The progress of students is carefully tracked and interventions are rapidly put in place if students are falling behind.
- Sixth form standards have improved more rapidly than in other areas of the school and are now good. This is as a result of the carefully directed interventions and good teaching and assessment that are

carefully matched to challenging targets for students.

- Students on vocational courses consistently achieve the highest grades. A-level outcomes are improving and the majority of students make good progress from their starting points. There has been a considerable reduction in the number of students who do not receive a grade at the end of their courses and this year progression rates are high and no students have needed to retake Year 12 courses.
- Students in the sixth form behave well, take great pride in their appearance and their school. Students are excellent role models for younger students. The sixth form provides an aspirational environment for its students while ensuring their personal development and welfare are paramount.
- Leaders make use of employers and local initiatives to help raise expectations and standards. All sixth form students undertake a period of high-quality work experience that is closely linked to their interests and aptitude and they report that they find it useful and it supports their study.
- The school sustains good links with local universities and this year good-quality information, advice and guidance has resulted in 81% of disadvantaged students moving on to university courses. Overall, apart from a small group of students who have taken a gap year, all sixth form leavers have moved on to university, employment or training.
- The majority of students enter the sixth form having already successfully gained GCSE qualifications at A\* to C in English and mathematics. The small group that need further support with this work are placed on a taught programme that leads to a further qualification in literacy or numeracy. In 2015, only a small proportion of this group of students were successful in gaining a GCSE at grades A\* to C in English or mathematics.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104251
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002470

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,062
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jacky Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Allman
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 368417
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://poolhayesarts.net/">http://poolhayesarts.net/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:postbox@poolhayesarts.com">postbox@poolhayesarts.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25–26 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, students from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The school has begun the process of converting to an academy within the ATT Academy Trust.
- The school has a small resource base for 10 students with autistic spectrum disorders.
- A small group of Year 11 students receive alternative educational provision at the Shepwell Centre in Walsall.
- In 2014 the school was deemed not to have met the national floor standards, as only 38% of its students gained five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics at their first attempt. However, by the end of the academic year some students had successfully retaken their examinations and 50% of students met the benchmark.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all year groups and looked at the work in students' books. They talked to students and reviewed information held by the school about students' progress.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, newly qualified teachers, members of the governing body, the chief executive of the ATT trust and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation including safeguarding records, self-evaluation summaries, the school improvement plan, behaviour records, school newsletters and information leaflets for parents.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 28 parents on the online questionnaire Parent View.

## Inspection team

Deborah James, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathon Ashley	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Ellis	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector



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