

# The Hastings Academy

Rye Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5DN

<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 January 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- While leaders have a clear view of what to do to improve the academy, this is not fully embedded in the day-to-day practice.
- Leaders have struggled to recruit and retain a stable teaching workforce and this has led to a lack of continuity and too frequent change for pupils.
- Pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics, is not improving quickly enough.
- Teachers are not consistently planning lessons closely enough to what pupils need to learn or be able to do.
- Leaders are not checking how new initiatives are working well enough.
- Teachers do not expect enough of pupils in terms of both the quality of their work or behaviour. Behaviour deteriorates when lessons do not fully engage or challenge them.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs, did not make good enough progress in 2015.
- Leaders have not done enough to promote literacy and a love of reading in pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are cared for very well. Pupils' wider education is thoughtfully planned to foster aspiration.
- The Principal, ably supported by effective senior leaders, has determinedly brought about a shift to a fully inclusive academy.
- Leaders' work to make pupils' attendance a priority has led to improved attendance for pupils.
- Pupils have rich opportunities to explore social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- The academy's safeguarding culture is strongly established and pupils feel safe and cared for well.
- Pupils are affable, friendly and pleased to attend the academy.
- The governors are astute; they challenge and support the academy effectively.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that rapid improvements are made to pupils' outcomes in mathematics
  - developing a literacy programme across all subjects which promotes a love of reading for all pupils, especially boys
  - evaluating precisely the impact of leaders' and managers' work to check the difference it is making to pupils' learning
  - ensuring all leaders check that lessons are sufficiently engaging and challenging to enable all pupils to make good progress
  - being intolerant of mediocrity and setting and upholding high standards
  - relentlessly striving to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce.
- Insist on the highest standards of behaviour in lessons by:
  - ensuring all staff use the behaviour policy consistently and consequences for poor behaviour are followed through
  - ensuring staff do not tolerate inappropriate calling out, low-level disruption or inattentiveness.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, building on the best practice in the academy, such that:
  - staff plan to deepen pupils' understanding
  - disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs make at least the same rates of progress as their peers
  - the needs of all pupils are met by teachers effectively engaging and challenging all pupils
  - questioning is effective in developing pupils' understanding and securing their knowledge
  - low-level disruption is challenged.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have worked hard to secure and retain teachers for the academy, but despite their efforts this has not been entirely successful. As a result, many of the staff are new to the academy. This has limited the impact of leaders' actions as significant numbers of staff have had to be inducted and trained at the same time. This has led to inconsistencies and a lack of continuity for pupils. Several members of staff had only been in post for a few weeks at the time of the inspection.
- Senior leaders are not defeatist about the challenges of recruitment. They have exploited a wide range of options to secure teachers and have thoughtfully planned career progression for all staff. Nonetheless, significant difficulties remain and pupils have suffered from high turnover and the instability this brings.
- The Principal has led a shift in expectation such that all pupils should be taught well and pupils should not routinely be excluded or removed from lessons. The ambition for this strategy is well understood but it is not well embedded in the classroom practice.
- Leaders have developed a range of new processes and procedures to improve the quality of teaching. However, their nascent nature means it is too soon to be able to judge their impact. Leaders are relying on measuring actions taken, rather than the difference these actions are making to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders are clear about their key role in raising standards for all pupils at the academy. However, the current arrangement for the leadership of mathematics is not leading to fast enough improvements. In science and English, leaders are accurate in judging what good progress looks like. However, their teams are relatively inexperienced and need support. Leaders know this and relevant training is in place to support teachers at the various points of their career.
- Information about the progress of pupils in the speech and language facility is not well integrated into information teachers have about these pupils, meaning they cannot accurately plan for their learning.
- Leaders have not ensured literacy is effectively promoted by all staff. Some strategies to improve literacy have been implemented. However, these are not consistently upheld or evaluated. For example, some initiatives were withdrawn when they were found not to be popular with older pupils but not replaced with alternatives. Leaders acknowledge the key importance of literacy for the academy's pupils but not enough has been done to promote a passion for reading for all.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is not improving rapidly enough because leaders have not ensured teachers' planning matches closely enough to meet their needs.
- Leaders have ensured attendance is improving for all pupils, and especially those who are disadvantaged, through careful targeting of pupil premium funding (extra government funds for eligible pupils). Leaders have been less successful in ensuring this funding is improving outcomes for these pupils. While there is some improvement, the gaps for disadvantaged pupils remain too wide.
- As a result of a good-quality in-house alternative, the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen markedly and this is particularly the case for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. None of these pupils have been excluded since September 2015.
- Highly effective safeguarding measures are in place and leaders have ensured a strong culture of care and concern for pupils' well-being is fostered. Information from parents from the academy's own survey confirms that that pupils feel safe.
- The broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Religious education is delivered in an integrated manner through a carefully mapped personal, social and health education programme. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs encourage pupils' wider education and development well.
- **The governance of the academy**
  - Governors are realistic and accurate in their view of the academy but ambitious for all its pupils.
  - They are very well informed about the academy by its leaders and hold them firmly to account, but offer a 'critical friend' for the academy's strategic planning.
  - Governors hold robust discussions and are knowledgeable about the performance management of staff, ensuring that equal opportunities are scrupulously upheld in this matter.
  - Governors are clear about the impact pupil premium funding is having on improving attendance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The academy makes very strong provision to keep pupils safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Leaders' actions have rightly placed an emphasis on the importance of teaching all pupils in the academy with high-quality lessons. Nonetheless, this has not led to securing consistently good teaching, both within some subjects, such as mathematics, science and humanities, or across year groups, so that pupils' progress is variable. Good practice has been developed and there are pockets of very good practice upon which to build.
- Where teachers plan effective lessons, pupils behave well because they are engaged in their learning. Some teachers skilfully ensure pupils are challenged to produce very high-quality work, such as in textiles and art. However, when lessons are a series of tasks not linked together with a clear purpose, pupils' behaviour is less good.
- Teachers usually mark books in line with the academy's policy but the impact this has is limited because teachers do not insist that pupils follow up and act on their advice. As a consequence, some disadvantaged pupils and boys do not make the progress they should because feedback is not driving their learning.
- Pupils make better progress when they do act quickly on the feedback they are given, such as in English and dance.
- Observations of learning in lessons by inspectors and evidence from pupils' books over time shows that teaching requires improvement because of one or more of the following features:
  - teachers too often deploy the same task for all pupils which means lower-attaining and the most-able pupils are not routinely well supported and challenged
  - teachers do not always demonstrate the flexibility to match lessons to pupils' responses
  - pupils are not always given clear explanation as to why they are learning a particular topic and this leaves pupils unsure about their work, or what they have to do to improve.
- Teaching in the speech and language centre is an exception to this where there is a close match between teachers' planning and pupils' requirements.
- As a result of better teaching in Year 11, pupils make better progress. This is because lessons are helping pupils to improve in areas where their knowledge or understanding is less secure.
- Pupils commented that teachers do not always follow through sanctions for low-level disruption, and lack of attention is tolerated for too long, disturbing the learning of others.
- Teaching assistants offer effective support for pupils through close questioning and challenge.
- Teachers have a good rapport with their classes and relationships are good but this sometimes leads to laxness in maintaining high standards of behaviour.
- Where teachers use questioning skilfully, pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed well. This was seen, for example, in media studies and Spanish. However, on too many occasions teachers' questioning allowed pupils to disengage, and offer an 'I don't know' response, without challenge or exploration, thus limiting progress.
- Stronger learning was seen where teachers regularly check pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have ensured pupils benefit from a strong programme which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, there are strong links with the local business community to raise pupils' career aspirations.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. A well-thought-out programme allows pupils to engage in debates, take part in business enterprise activities, attend a wide range of trips and visits, and take part in the academy's decision-making process through the academy council.
- Inspectors were told by pupils that the topic of keeping safe is raised frequently with them and they were confident that they would receive good support if they had any concerns. There is a strong staff presence at break and lunchtimes and pupils regulated themselves well during these times.
- Bullying is considered to be rare and dealt with swiftly should it occur. All groups in the academy are treated with respect.

- Pupils explore fundamental British values through a wide-ranging programme which explores local, national and international topics, appropriate to pupils' age: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, current affairs such as the situation in Syria, extremism, driving awareness and careers guidance. For example, a Year 7 nurture group were engaged in a discussion about cheating and could clearly articulate right from wrong. This course prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' attendance is improving. All pupils were able to explain about the key figure for attendance of 95%, which is followed through in assemblies and form times.
- Older pupils support younger ones as learning mentors and this is a benefit to all pupils who participate, building confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils who attend the speech and language provision are known really well as individuals and their learning and pastoral requirements are catered for well.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next steps in their education after Year 11.
- The behaviour and attendance of those attending alternative provision is well managed.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When pupils are engaged in lessons they behave well but where teaching is less strong they are too often distracted and lose focus on their learning.
- Pupils are clear about what is expected of them but are not always supported by staff to uphold these expectations.
- Pupils occasionally use inappropriate language in lessons and this is not always swiftly enough challenged by teachers.
- Pupils are reluctant to read out loud or develop their answers to questions posed by teachers. They are not resilient in the face of a difficult piece of work.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the academy site, showing respect for the building and each other.

### Outcomes for pupils

### require improvement

- Pupils' outcomes are not good. Despite some improvements, such as the number of pupils gaining the top A\* or A grades, the 2015 examination results were not good enough. This was particularly the case in mathematics where too few pupils made sufficient progress.
- The progress of pupils is now more accurately assessed as a result of working with external partners to moderate pupils' work. This information indicates that pupils in Year 11 are making better progress than last year.
- Currently, for pupils in Key Stage 4, the picture is improving with gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others closing.
- The progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 is improving but not sufficiently quickly to secure rapid gains in outcomes.
- Where teaching is better in mathematics and science, pupils are making progress, but this is not consistent. Not all pupils are making the gains that will enable them to succeed at the level of which they are capable. In English, pupils are making improved progress compared to last year.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is variable. Pupils in some year groups are making better progress than others. This inconsistency is owing to variability in the quality of teaching pupils receive. Their progress is better in English than in mathematics or history and geography.
- The most-able pupils are performing better in subjects such as English and chemistry where they are sufficiently stretched and challenged.
- Pupils' books indicate that some pupils are not sufficiently pushed to produce their best work. Sometimes the work is too easy and does not stretch pupils.
- Pupils supported by the academy's speech and language provision have detailed assessments of their needs. Teaching follows clear objectives and pupils are fully engaged to speak fluently.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now catching up with their peers and the gaps are closing, although not as rapidly in mathematics as other subjects.
- Pupils who attend the academy's alternative provision at Plumpton College or with Entertainment

Workshop make good progress on courses that lead to appropriate qualifications. They are supervised well and their behaviour and attendance are good.

- Teaching assistants offer effective guidance and challenge for the pupils they support who make good progress in lessons. As a result, pupils who need to catch up are well supported in class but teachers do not always plan carefully enough to ensure they are quickly enough making up ground.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136401
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10005528

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy special sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	849
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Wallace
<b>Principal</b>	Michael Brett
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 711950
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office.tha@hasla.org.uk">office.tha@hasla.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 May 2013

## Information about this school

- The academy is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The academy is part of the Hastings Academies Trust and works in close alliance with St Leonards Academy under an Executive Principal and the same governing body.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- Over half of the pupils at the academy are eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra government funding given to schools for those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The academy serves a population that is predominantly of White British heritage.
- A small number of pupils attend dedicated provision to support pupils with speech and language needs.
- The Principal has joined the academy since the last inspection.
- Small numbers of pupils attend off-site placements at Plumpton College and Entertainment Workshop.
- The academy met the government floor targets, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress, in 2014.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 28 lessons, 11 of which were jointly observed with senior staff. Inspectors visited the specialist speech and language on-site provision.
- Inspectors met with the Principal, Executive Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers including newly qualified teachers, pupils, governors and a parent.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including safeguarding procedures, the academy's information on pupils' performance, records relating to behaviour and attendance, performance management, minutes of governors' meetings, and self-evaluation policies.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and tutor periods and met formally and informally with pupils.
- Books belonging to a sample of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and staff surveys, as well as comments received via the free text facility on Parent View.

## Inspection team

Helena Read, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anna Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Bowles	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Lewell	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Storey	Ofsted inspector
Michael Walters	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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

