

The Hathershaw College

Bellfield Avenue, Hathershaw, Oldham OL8 3EP

Inspection dates	20–21 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress in the majority of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those in the hearing resource centre, make good progress because of the high-quality support that they receive. Achievement of the most-able pupils is improving in most subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and their attainment is catching up with that of other pupils in school and nationally.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers know the pupils well and plan interesting lessons that engage them. They follow the school's marking and feedback policy well, which ensures that pupils know what to do to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school. This is reflected in the fact that attendance is high when compared with that in other schools.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of risk and how to keep themselves safe.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, the school is a very harmonious community and pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors have very high expectations and a determination to ensure that pupils achieve well and have the best possible experience in the school. They tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection quickly and robustly and have brought about significant improvements in teaching and achievement as a result.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and learning are not outstanding.
- Teachers do not always set work that is challenging enough for the most able. This is particularly true in humanities, where pupils' progress is slower than in other subjects.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding well enough in lessons. Sometimes they move on too quickly and at other times not quickly enough.
- Pupils do not get consistent opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teaching over time is outstanding, so that achievement becomes outstanding, by:
 - setting work for pupils that they find challenging, particularly for the most able and in humanities subjects
 - constantly checking in lessons that pupils understand, providing help quickly when they need it, and moving them on to new activities as soon as they are ready
 - setting meaningful literacy activities for pupils, including extended writing opportunities where appropriate, so that pupils' writing skills are as good in all subjects as they are in English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal has very high aspirations for pupils in the school and sets high expectations for pupils and staff. He provides excellent leadership. Comments from the staff about his 'amazing vision' are typical. Staff morale is high and all staff who responded to a school questionnaire felt that the school was well led and managed. Staff are prepared to work hard because they can see that they are accelerating pupils' achievement.
- The principal is well supported by other members of the leadership team, who carry out their roles with determination. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses, prioritise and plan actions for improvement very carefully and closely monitor that they are working. There are highly effective systems for checking how well pupils are learning and this ensures that any pupil who falls behind receives good support very quickly.
- Middle leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas and can talk confidently about what they have done to bring about improvement. They all keep files for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. These are very thorough documents that hold a range of information collected, for example, by lesson observations and work scrutiny. This information is accurate and tells leaders what they need to know. Inspectors' findings about the quality of work in pupils' books and the quality of teaching agreed with what was in the monitoring files.
- Leaders use a 'teacher dashboard', which holds a range of information about the work of individual teachers and how well they are doing. This is used well to set targets for teachers that are linked to raising the achievement of pupils. It is also used to ensure that all teachers receive training that is matched to their needs and to identify the best practice in school so that it can be shared. This is having a very positive impact on developing teacher confidence and improving the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leaders take swift action to tackle areas of underperformance. For example, in 2015, GCSE mathematics results were not as good as they had hoped. Teachers have been provided with additional support from mathematics specialists in other schools and their assessments of pupils' work have been scrutinised to check that they are now accurate. Work in pupils' books, particularly in Year 11, shows that they are making more rapid progress as a result.
- The curriculum is broad and is adapted as necessary to meet pupils' needs. For example, a policy of early entry to GCSE examinations meant that pupils did not achieve well in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages. Early entry has been stopped and outcomes in languages for current pupils are above average. The curriculum is underpinned by a range of external visits and visitors to the school, and provision for extra-curricular activities such as sports is very strong.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values is excellent. Tutor time is used effectively to promote discussion about current affairs and many pupils showed themselves to be very knowledgeable about what is going on in the world. Assemblies also support this. During the inspection, for example, assemblies were promoting reading but with a particular focus on Shakespeare to fit in with the current national celebrations of his life and work.
- The school is a very harmonious community and leaders take great care to promote equalities. Pupils feel valued and celebrate diversity. Leaders and teachers take effective steps to remove any barriers to learning. For example, pupil premium funding has been used wisely, and as a result, gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others are narrowing. Catch-up funding is used effectively in Year 7 so that pupils with low attainment on entry make good progress. Pupils with hearing impairment are extremely well supported so that they have access to all aspects of the school's curriculum and achieve well.
- Leaders take effective steps to communicate with parents and the school has received the Leading Parent Partnership award on consecutive occasions. Parents are very positive about the steps that are taken to support their children.
- Some aspects of leaders' work, for example that being done to improve the quality of teaching, need more time to embed and to become consistent across the school.

■ The governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have undertaken an external review of their practice and have used the findings to improve their work. They now have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing because they request and receive detailed information about key areas of its work from a number of different leaders and teachers. Link governors take responsibility for meeting with, and finding information from, different subject leaders.
 - Governors have also seen examples of pupils' work that have been scrutinised by leaders and steps that teachers have been advised to take to help them improve.
 - Governors check that performance management targets are robust and ensure that pay progression is closely linked to pupil achievement. They also check that targets and training are improving teachers' performance. Some governors are very actively involved in the life of the school. One, for example, actively helps to promote pupils' understanding of British values and democracy by arranging for local political figures to speak to pupils when they are holding mock elections.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are up to date on all currently required training and, where appropriate, are joined by governors. Both staff and governors have had training on key issues such as child sexual exploitation and the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan lessons that capture pupils' interests. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and their behaviour is typically good. Teachers manage the few occasions when pupils drift off task very well.
- Pupils take pride in their work, completing it carefully and to the best of their ability. Teachers follow the school's feedback policy of providing pupils with guidance about how to improve their work and giving them time to 'MIB' it (make it better). Pupils respond well to this and most make good progress as a result.
- Teachers typically ask good questions that make pupils think carefully about what they are learning. Occasionally they do not check closely enough in lessons whether all pupils understand and can do the work set. This means that sometimes pupils still have misconceptions about what they are learning. At other times pupils are not moved on quickly enough when they have already grasped a concept.
- Teaching assistants have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils with whom they are working. They provide good support for pupils, but are careful to challenge and not to do the pupils' work for them. Communicators for pupils with hearing impairment are particularly skilled and ensure that pupils can understand what is expected of them and take full part in lessons. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve well.
- In most lessons, pupils receive high levels of challenge. In one Year 9 science lesson, for example, pupils were learning about climate change in a particularly challenging way by having to use data to predict change over the next 500 years. As a result, they made excellent progress and some were already working at GCSE grade A standard. However, in other lessons, particularly in humanities at key stage 3, pupils do some low-level tasks such as drawing posters which do not stretch the most able.
- Pupils write well in English lessons, and literacy and reading are a key focus across the school. Some teachers promote literacy extremely well. For example, in science there was evidence of a teacher promoting not only literacy but spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a lesson by getting pupils to read and explain the First World War poem 'Dulce et decorum est' to learn about the effects of chlorine gas. However, in some lessons, literacy development is superficial, with activities such as unscrambling words. Sometimes pupils are not expected to write in enough detail.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and that they appreciate the time teachers take to help them to learn. All feel valued and say that staff will do anything to help them including, for example, ensuring that they have money for lunch if they forget to bring it with them. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and all dress very smartly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and appreciate learning from the range of cultures within the school. They are respectful and understanding of difference and say that there is no place in their school for any form of homophobia. They support each other well, work collaboratively and are proactive in supporting pupils who are new to the country and to English. They are quick to get involved in charity work or to help others in the school by becoming, for example, a reading buddy or a member of the pupil support team. These pupils are trained to resolve any issues among their peers and to offer support for those who may be feeling vulnerable.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they say that there is always a good staff presence at breaks and lunchtimes. They say that there is no tolerance of bullying and that on the rare occasions when it happens it is dealt with quickly. They are also confident that they are taught to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, where they develop a good understanding of issues such as e-safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming and were keen to talk to inspectors about their school. Those who did so were convinced that school has improved recently and that behaviour is much better than it was.
- Teachers have very high expectations and make them clear to pupils, which leads to good behaviour in lessons. The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff on the rare cases when pupils misbehave. This leads to incidents that result in exclusion being very infrequent.
- Behaviour around school is also typically good. The corridors are narrow but pupils manage this well so that the environment remains safe. New dining arrangements have been introduced. These are effective and ensure that pupils can get their lunches quickly and tidy away after themselves.
- Pupils enjoy school, and as a result, attendance for all groups is high. Very few pupils are persistently absent.
- A very small minority of boys are immature and can be silly at breaks and lunchtimes. The site is well supervised and teachers are quick to ensure that this never becomes a serious issue. Leaders are aware and are working to provide additional clubs and activities so that pupils are purposefully occupied.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils start school in Year 7 with attainment that is typically well below average. They make consistently good progress from their starting points across all year groups and in the majority of subjects. As a result, at the end of Year 11 they reach standards that are at least average and are continuing to improve.
- Science is a strength of the school and the achievement of pupils is consistently higher than average because work is challenging, expectations are high and activities are innovative and engaging.
- In 2015, outcomes in mathematics declined. Leaders tackled this quickly so that work in pupils' books is now of a good standard and they are making good progress. Most have a good grasp of mathematical concepts and are able to apply them to a range of real-life contexts. Leaders have used catch-up funding (funding provided by the government to support pupils who started school with attainment below Level 4 in English or mathematics) to employ a primary teaching specialist who is able to support colleagues with the identification of gaps in the mathematical knowledge of lower attaining pupils. Teachers are using this information to close gaps by providing pupils with more concrete and practical experiences.
- Pupils achieve well in English, including those who are at an early stage of learning it. Reading is promoted well throughout the school, with a range of different activities and programmes to support those who find it challenging. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop their literacy and extended writing skills in English lessons, but this is not consistently the case in other subjects.
- The special educational needs coordinator provides good leadership for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, deploys teaching assistants well and checks that teachers are providing activities that meet their needs. As a result, these pupils achieve well. Carefully targeted support ensures that disadvantaged pupils achieve well so that gaps between their attainment and that of others are closing in most year groups and subjects.

- Achievement of the most-able pupils is increasing and an increasing number are predicted to attain the highest grades at GCSE in 2016. However, in a small minority of subjects, particularly humanities, such pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not all make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improving attainment ensures that pupils are well prepared for the future. The number of pupils who leave school and are not engaged in education, employment or training is very low.

School details

Unique reference number	137039
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10012140

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,056
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ateeque Ur-Rehman
Principal	David McEntee
Telephone number	0161 770 8555
Website	www.hathershaw.org.uk
Email address	mail@hathershaw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2014

Information about this school

- The Hathershaw College is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is a member of West Oldham Trust, along with three local primary schools.
- Since the previous inspection, a new principal has taken up post in the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- More than three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages and almost all of these speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- A hearing resource centre is based in the school. This is funded by the local authority and managed by the school's governing body. The centre provides specialist support in communication for 12 pupils who are educated mainly in mainstream classes.
- The school makes very limited use of alternative provision, but one pupil currently attends part-time provision at Oldham Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum national expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons. Some of these observations of teaching and learning were conducted jointly with four different leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work in books were scrutinised in lessons. In addition, jointly with the principal and vice-principal, inspectors reviewed work in science, humanities, mathematics and English books from both key stages.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including minutes of meetings, information provided to governors, action plans, examples of anonymised performance management targets and records of leaders' monitoring activities.
- Inspectors spoke formally with senior and middle leaders, as well as with the chair of the governing body and two other governors, a cross-section of different teachers and the school's improvement partner. They also held formal meetings with a number of groups of pupils as well as talking to them informally at breaks and lunchtimes.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire or to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Instead inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of staff and parents.

Inspection team

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