

Uxbridge High School

The Greenway, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 2PR

Inspection dates

22–23 June 2016

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

- The school opted into the government's new 'Progress 8' measure in 2015. Overall, key stage 4 Progress 8 was significantly below average.
- Outcomes for pupils at GCSE, based on attaining five grades at A* to C including English and mathematics, have been below the national average since the last inspection.
- Gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others remain, including in the school's predictions for this year's public examination results.
- Teaching is not sufficiently good in some subjects so pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve highly in significant areas of their education.
- Too many lessons are not planned well enough to meet the individual needs of pupils. This is having a negative impact on progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and some White British pupils.
- There is significant variability in the use of new policies and procedures which are intended to set a high standard of teaching and learning. For example, the school's 'feed forward' assessment system is not used consistently.
- There is inconsistency in the standard of teaching and learning. Consequently, the high standards seen in some departments are not maintained across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal and key post holders in the senior team understand the school's weaknesses, provide strong direction and have a clear strategy for improvement.
- The governing body is ambitious for the school to move forward and has a healthy balance of support and challenge in the way that it works with the leadership team.
- The most able pupils make good progress in most subjects.
- Significant changes to the pastoral systems have improved behaviour and established a growing engagement with the school's 'proud' values.
- Pupils feel safe and the school has effective systems to ensure that safeguarding has a high priority.
- The sixth form is increasingly popular. Good teaching and effective careers information, advice and guidance prepare pupils well for work, apprenticeships or university.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils at GCSE by ensuring that:
 - teachers set work at the appropriate level of challenge for pupils, including those who are identified as disadvantaged
 - the school's marking and feedback systems are followed consistently to ensure that pupils know how they can improve their work and what to do to reach the next stage in their learning
 - school leaders continue to address with urgency the poor performance of some White British pupils.

- Achieve consistency in teaching and learning, by:
 - consolidating the professional development work that has taken place this year to ensure that all subject areas enable pupils to make at least expected progress
 - ensuring that all middle and senior leaders share the same high expectations when monitoring and scrutinising work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The senior team is working cohesively to move the school forward under the leadership of the principal. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and an action plan with sensible priorities and timescales that will continue the improvement journey that is already underway.
- Leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching and a range of staff have embraced the opportunity to get involved in professional development. Initiatives include a coaching programme, mentoring and bespoke professional development both inside and outside the school.
- There is a far greater openness about professional development than at the time of the last full inspection. This is exemplified by the 'open classrooms week' in May, during which over 100 lessons were visited by staff who then discussed techniques they might transfer to their own practice.
- Teaching is not yet strong across the school; however, the school's own assessment of the quality of teaching through formal observations, short visits to lessons and looking at books, suggests that it is improving. The subjects which require further improvement have been identified accurately by the principal.
- Performance management is used effectively and there are robust procedures to ensure that staff who are performing well are recognised, but equally that pay awards are not given where targets have been missed.
- Middle and senior leaders are clear about their role in driving up standards and monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is still inconsistency in the level of expectation of some leaders, which results in variability in standards across departments.
- The government's pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used for a wide range of initiatives such as providing breakfast tokens, early morning access to the 'flexible learning centre' and bringing in motivational speakers to boost pupils' sense of self and engagement with learning. Attendance has improved for this group, as has their overall attainment and progress. However, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has remained consistent.
- Newly qualified teachers and those in training are well supported by the school. They appreciate the time that has been invested in developing their skills and the school's commitment to training through in-house initiatives and external courses.
- The curriculum offer is broad, with a good range of academic and vocational options at key stage 4. The school provides guidance to support sensible decision-making about both GCSE options and post-16 courses.
- The curriculum supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. In addition, events including assemblies and workshops extend this aspect of the pupils' education. For example, the Year 9 pupils were addressed by a Holocaust survivor during the inspection and a group of mixed-age pupils were working with external support from the Royal Shakespeare Company to prepare for an upcoming production.
- The school encourages pupils to think about values such as being respectful and open minded through gaining awards in its new 'proud' scheme. Pupils were happy to talk about the awards they had achieved and their involvement in extra-curricular clubs such as debating club.
- The parent survey indicated that the majority of parents are positive about the school and changes that have been made, for example to the target-setting and reporting system.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has changed the way that it works since the last inspection. There is a greater degree of interrogation when looking at information provided by the school and governors are much more outcome focused.
 - Link governors visit subject areas termly, walking into lessons, holding discussions with the subject leader and completing a feedback form as part of their routine. This has led to a higher degree of understanding about the way the school works and greater accountability for the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has invested in training a larger number of staff than legally required to a higher level for safeguarding and school leaders and governors understand their responsibilities well. There are robust systems for recording any concerns and leaders provided evidence of timely and appropriate referrals to external agencies.
- Pupils are aware of the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation and staff have been appropriately trained in response to the government's legislation in this area.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not make good use of assessment information captured by the school to plan for the progress of different groups of pupils. Consequently, some groups, for example disadvantaged pupils, are unable to make the gains that they should in some lessons. This evidence is supported by poorer outcomes for this group at GCSE.
- Not all teachers check that pupils understand work before moving on to the next task and questioning is often very simple. In these lessons, pupils lose focus and become distracted, leading to low-level disruption which has a negative impact on learning.
- The school's system for giving pupils clear next steps using 'feed forward' comments is not consistently used by teachers. Where this is the case, the progress of pupils is poor and they do not have a good understanding of the level they are working at, or what to do next.
- In discussions, pupils from key stages 3 and 4 reported variation in the quality of teaching across subject areas.
- Pupils' pride in their work varies significantly between lessons, even for the same groups of pupils. Consequently, they make much better progress in some curriculum areas than others.
- There is some use of poor language around the school. Younger pupils raised it in discussions with inspectors and it was observed during the inspection.
- These weaknesses contrast sharply with the more effective teaching in the school. For example, in the art lessons and some of the English, mathematics and geography lessons seen, pupils make gains because they are stimulated by the content, challenged by effective questioning and supported by constructive feedback.
- Teaching in the top sets and in the sixth form is generally strong. In these groups, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and good subject knowledge, make progress and enjoy learning.
- Considerable work with the most able pupils has resulted in good provision for this group, particularly in subjects with setting by ability. These pupils enjoy the challenge presented by the new ability-based 'pathways' and appreciate the clearly identified 'platinum' tasks that they should complete in lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The majority of pupils feel well supported and appreciate the opportunities to grow and contribute to the school community, for example through being anti-bullying ambassadors or school councillors.
- The high profile that has been given to the school's 'proud' values and the use of the pupil passport to record achievements that contribute to associated rewards has been positively received by the pupils and parents.
- There is a clear emphasis on personal development and being safe through the citizenship curriculum and additional assemblies and events. Pupils spoke confidently about how to be safe online in discussion with inspectors. They feel confident that bullying and homophobic language is tackled by staff.
- Weekly house assemblies provide an opportunity for pupils to come together and reflect on topical themes. Technology week was the focus of assembly during the inspection and pupils had the opportunity to present to their peers.
- The school ensures that procedures for taking pupils off roll are appropriate and support good safeguarding.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils. Attendance is monitored daily and progress is reviewed termly. It is an effective strategy for this group who go on to achieve level 1 courses and continue with English, mathematics and core science at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well behaved, polite and respectful in the majority of classes and around the school.
- Pupils feel that behaviour has improved since the principal introduced a new behaviour system and supported this with 'patrol' to ensure that there is little disruption to lessons. Pupils are clear that there are non-negotiables and understand the consequences of challenging these.
- Although the number of permanent exclusions this year is above the national average, higher expectations are clearly having an impact on behaviour and the school's monitoring information indicates that poor behaviour is reducing over time.

- Attendance is in line with national average and considerable energy is put into maintaining and improving this figure.
- The introduction of non-teaching guidance leaders has been a significant development to support the focus on good behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is well below the national average and fell significantly last year compared with the year before.
- The new Progress 8 measure is based on pupils' progress across eight subjects including English and mathematics and will be used to judge all secondary schools from 2016. The school chose to opt into this measure early and results were significantly below average for Progress 8 in the 2015 GCSE examinations.
- English, science, languages and humanities were all significantly below the national scores which measure progress from key stages 2 to 4 in the 2015 results.
- Although the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is increasing, the gap between this group and others in the school has remained consistent.
- The White British disadvantaged pupils are forecast to achieve poorly compared with their peers this summer according to the school's assessment information. Improving this cohort's performance has been identified as a priority and the flexible learning centre has been established to support this key group as a substantial long-term strategy.
- Historical outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are low. However, this has been recognised and leaders have taken action to address progress through changes to the curriculum and using targeted intervention groups. The impact of these recent interventions is not yet evident in the outcomes for this group.
- Literacy intervention work and the whole-school reading programme have had an impact on outcomes for pupils. The Year 7 'catch-up' group have made significant progress in both reading and writing.
- The most able pupils made good progress in mathematics in the 2015 GCSE results, where they exceeded national figures for making more than expected progress.
- The most able pupils have been the focus of significant work in the school and they are now making good progress in most subjects across the year groups. Progress across subjects and year groups is less consistent for middle- and lower-ability pupils.
- According to the school's performance information, outcomes at GCSE in both English and mathematics will increase significantly this year.
- Pupils are well prepared and supported for the next stage of life. The number of pupils in education, employment or training was just below the national average in 2015. Those pupils who are identified as at risk of not being in education, employment or training are prioritised for further careers support and guidance.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The sixth form leadership is strong and this is having a positive impact on standards.
- Considerable care is taken to ensure that students choose appropriate courses and performance is then monitored tightly using six-weekly assessments.
- Attainment at A Level is steadily improving. The school anticipates that the upward trend will continue with this summer's public examination results. Overall standards seen in the sixth form during the inspection suggest that this judgement is accurate.
- Students studying art, business studies and German achieved above the national figures in the top grade bracket (A* to B) in 2015.
- Students studying vocational subjects performed below the national average in 2015; however, the leaders have acted decisively to address this. School assessment information and evidence seen during the inspection indicates that there will be significant improvement this year.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Where it is most effective, there is considerable challenge and consolidation of understanding.

- A small number of lessons seen lacked the opportunity for deeper learning that was seen in the majority.
- The rich extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for sixth formers to develop their wider skills and, together with high-quality careers advice and guidance, students are well prepared for their next steps.
- Destinations information shows an increasing number of students going to university and an increasing number to the top Russell Group universities.
- Students spoke positively about the collegiate environment in the sixth form and enjoy learning there.

School details

Unique reference number	136768
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10011897

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,219
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Waine
Principal	Nigel Clemens
Telephone number	01895 234060
Website	www.uhs.org.uk
Email address	office@uhs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- Uxbridge High School is a larger than average size co-educational secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is high. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds and the proportion that comes from minority ethnic backgrounds is high.
- A large proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little above the national average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is low.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A small number of pupils are educated by off-site alternative providers: Uxbridge College, Skills Hub, Jubilee Academy and Asphaleia.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons or parts of lessons across a range of departments, some paired with senior leaders. Books were scrutinised as part of these lesson observations. In addition, a separate scrutiny of Year 10 English books was carried out.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in the corridors, the canteen and play spaces at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the principal and senior leaders; members of the governing body; middle leaders; the special educational needs coordinator; newly qualified teachers and those in training with Teach First; the careers information, advice and guidance leader; and the literacy leader.
- Formal meetings were held with various groups of pupils including the most able, the school council, recently excluded pupils, and sixth formers. Informal conversations were held with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- A large number of documents were scrutinised including the school's self-evaluation, information on the current progress of pupils, behaviour logs, attendance and punctuality information, policies and procedures including for pupil premium spending and the curriculum.
- The single central record and safer recruitment procedures were checked.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the staff survey, parent text comments, responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and replies to the student survey.

Inspection team

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