

# Harwich and Dovercourt High School

Hall Lane, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex CO12 3TG

<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 June 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the new headteacher's vision and leadership has empowered leaders throughout the school. Rapid and effective actions are now taken to meet pupils' needs. Teaching and learning are now good in all year groups.
- Governors' decisive action to improve leadership at all levels has led to an increased focus on teaching and learning. As a result, pupil progress has improved sharply.
- Middle leaders' monitoring is effective and leads to accurate and insightful actions that have improved teaching and the consistency of assessment.
- Teachers help pupils to progress quickly, because assessment guides them towards their next steps in learning. Effective target setting and good support in lessons leads to pupils' good progress.
- Leaders design a wide range of high-quality training activities for teachers. These have led to a positive step change in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' skills in writing are developed well. This results from effective leadership of literacy development across all subjects.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is excellent and is a strength of the school.
- The 'community system' delivers high-quality personal welfare that has created a close-knit supportive community. Proud pupils unanimously agree that they are happy and safe in school. Behaviour in lessons, before and after school and at lunch and breaktimes is good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The sixth form requires improvement. New leadership is improving outcomes but the changes have not yet had sufficient time to have a full impact.
- Pupils are not yet sufficiently confident and self-assured to learn without constant teacher input.
- A few subjects, including science, have not yet had time to fully demonstrate the impact of recent improvements.

## Full report

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

- Continue to improve the quality of education in the sixth form to ensure that achievement is more consistent across subjects, with students' progress matching that found in the best subjects by ensuring that:
  - students are given better guidance to ensure that they embark on courses that are matched to their abilities and interests
  - there are better opportunities for students to develop their confidence in speaking and reflection
  - teachers maximise learning time and deepen students' understanding, by giving students greater responsibility for acquiring new knowledge.
  
- Ensure that outcomes for pupils and students improve even further by:
  - improving pupils' confidence and skills in speaking in a wide range of contexts
  - improving provision so that the achievement of pupils across all subjects matches that found in the best subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Governors have taken decisive action to improve leadership at all levels since the last inspection. Most importantly, they appointed a headteacher with a track record of school improvement. The headteacher combines the vision to make this a good or better school and the expertise in how to do it. As a result, a streamlined senior leadership team and an expanded middle leadership team have driven rapid change and outcomes are now good in a wide range of subjects.
- The headteacher's vision for the changes required to move the school forward rapidly has galvanised the staff and brought about an open and transparent culture of improvement. As a result, the staff support each other in improving teaching.
- The capacity of middle leaders to drive improvement has increased due to the adoption by leaders and governors of a new and effective line management system. This is leading to raising standards across subjects and across year groups.
- Leaders have designed a consistent and comprehensive monitoring system for teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders now provide support as well as a consistent challenge through a well-understood performance management system. As a consequence teaching, learning and assessment have improved rapidly to be consistently good in all year groups and subjects.
- Leaders in the teaching and learning team have a detailed picture of the strengths and development needs of each teacher, derived from their regular monitoring. This picture then guides decisions about individual teachers' continuing professional development needs.
- Leadership has been strengthened through greater accountability by heads of faculty for the standard of teaching and learning and assessment in their areas. Additionally, new lead practitioners provide bespoke and effective support for teachers whose performance needs improving. Heads of faculty have good skills in assessing teaching and can provide evidence of rapid improvements in their team's performance.
- Leaders have ensured that performance management is well understood by all staff and that middle leaders are trained to undertake their role in the process. Judgements about performance are now rigorous and fair, being based on a suitable and wide range of evidence.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of democracy and equality. They regularly participate in mock elections. For example, pupils were debating the European Union referendum and having a mock referendum in school. The British values of respect and tolerance pervade the behaviour system, with the concept of 'repair and rebuild' as part of every sanction.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully through varied activities and opportunities, for example a recent project looking into the history of the local area in the Second World War when persecuted children were evacuated to the town. It provided pupil leadership opportunities and left an indelible memory on pupils about the generosity of the human spirit at times of moral crisis.
- The headteacher's vision of the curriculum has enhanced the academic rigour expected of the pupils. At the same time there are clear work-related qualifications that provide for the needs of all pupils. A new engineering course will be introduced to Year 10 from September, meeting the needs of the local economy. This has recruited well and will complement the well-established and successful hair and beauty course.
- The extra-curricular provision is wide and popular with pupils of all year groups. The sports clubs have succeeded in developing an impressive number of pupils who represent their county or region.
- Leaders have ensured that each subject area has had external support of an appropriate level to assist in quality assurance or improving the quality of teaching and learning. Several subjects, including mathematics and English, have an excellent GCSE partnership with local schools who use a common assessment framework. Marking is then carried out independently of the school to ensure accuracy. This gives weight and confidence to the school's analysis of pupils' progress and likely outcomes.
- The school has made effective use of external links and support. It has utilised the local authority, two teaching school alliances and a 'peer assessment and support' exercise known as 'Essex triads'. This involved leaders openly and honestly sharing information on the school and being visited by headteachers and senior leaders from two other Essex schools.
- Governors, the headteacher and other leaders have used their skills and resources to improve the school rapidly to now be a good school. However, communication has so far not been effective enough to change some parents' negative perceptions of the school. Inspectors received very mixed comments from parents. Concerns were often around the use of temporary staff, which have been needed during the

school's more robust approach to tackling the performance of teachers. Other parents were very positive. For example, one parent referring to her daughter told inspectors, 'she has totally flourished. I cannot fault the school and I recommend it to anyone considering their secondary school options.'

#### ■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body has a wide range of expertise that enables it to both support and challenge school leaders. It includes school leaders from other schools, qualified teachers and managers from business. They work actively in partnership with middle leaders at appropriate times.
  - Governors took decisive actions to improve leadership at all levels after the last inspection. This led to the appointment of the current headteacher and the investment in a new staffing structure to increase capacity in teaching, learning and assessment.
  - Governors and the headteacher share a vision for high-quality teaching and learning and pupil welfare. They support this vision through financial investment and performance management. They check that teachers' progression through the pay scale is linked to the quality of their work.
  - Governors ask challenging questions of leaders and track the issues over time. For example, governors investigated the 2015 results thoroughly. Over subsequent meetings they pursued a variety of lines of questioning to find out what was being done and whether actions were leading to improvement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and fully compliant with legislation. Pastoral leaders use information technology skilfully to monitor incidents and track trends. Resulting from this, they use assemblies and the personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) curriculum to be responsive to pupils' needs.
- Pupils feel very confident that they are safe and can explain how to keep themselves safe online, in school and in the community. All legal requirements are met.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and most is now consistently good.
- Leaders have created a comprehensive database of prior and current achievement information, which teachers use effectively to inform their planning and match activities to pupils' needs. This accelerates pupils' progress in lessons over time.
- Leaders make sure that teachers' assessments are checked, sometimes by the leaders themselves or by a wide range of well-qualified partners. In this way leaders assure themselves and the governing body that the judgements teachers make are accurate and give them a reliable picture of pupils' learning.
- Teachers identify the disadvantaged pupils in their groups and plan for their needs effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are taught well in all subjects and are making progress at least in line with their end-of-year targets.
- Teachers plan well for the needs of pupils who have special education needs or disability because of the school's system of 'one-plans', which, for each identified pupil, provide a very strong analysis of their needs. Consequently, good progress starts quickly in Year 7 and enables many pupils who have special educational needs or disability to catch up with other pupils.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately and give effective support to pupils. They are well trained.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This was seen during the inspection in the accurate way that misconceptions were addressed in pupils' books and in lessons.
- Teachers give considerable time to the assessment of pupils' work and follow the school's assessment policy well in almost all cases. Some parents were particularly appreciative of the extra help given to pupils in Year 11. For example, 'Many of the teachers have been available for extra sessions during the holidays and weekends to provide a tailored revision programme for her. They have also given freely of their time during the school week if my daughter has needed to seek help, advice or encouragement to help her through her GCSEs.'
- Teachers use good questioning techniques to challenge pupils and encourage them to give more depth to their explanations. For example in a Year 8 music lesson, skilful questioning enabled pupils to give a critique of a performance using a wide range of technical language correctly.
- Teachers have high expectations and positive relationships with pupils across all subjects and year groups. As a result, attitudes to learning are positive in most cases. For example, pupils were enthusiastic learners in physical education (PE) lessons because of the effective use of scoring systems that enabled pupils to measure their own progress.

- Leaders and teachers have created a safe and secure learning environment which gives pupils confidence to make mistakes and learn from the experience with their peers. For example, in music and PE peer feedback is highly valued and had a positive impact on pupils' progress in many lessons seen by inspectors.
- Homework is set regularly, using an online system to share this with parents and pupils. Good examples were seen in pupils' work, across a range of subjects, where knowledge has been extended through the task set.
- The school is effective in developing literacy skills across the curriculum. Pupils have a literacy target in their planners that is used as a focus for feedback in other subjects when appropriate. The impact is apparent in the improvements over time in writing, seen in pupils' work during the inspection. Although present in science, the development of numeracy across different subjects is less evident than literacy.
- Pupils with high prior attainment articulated how improvements in marking, feedback and planning since the last inspection have improved their learning. Their progress is improving as most teachers in all year groups set work to challenge these pupils and target them with more difficult questions.
- Pupils can be over-reliant on the planning and support of their teachers and are not yet confident and self-assured learners. Until recently, there were too few opportunities for pupils to develop the confidence to talk about their work. The school now recognises the importance of developing pupils' confidence to discuss their work with other pupils and their teachers in order to both increase their understanding and develop the skill of good communication.
- In a few instances the progress of a small minority of pupils is slow because teachers have not planned learning that effectively challenges them.

## **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 are safe in the school because of the well-established structure for pastoral support with effective leadership and clear roles for staff.
- Pupils in Year 7 valued the transition arrangements. They are particularly effective for pupils who have special educational needs or disability because a comprehensive needs analysis and starting point is communicated to teachers promptly.
- There is a strong information and advice and guidance process to support pupils and parents in making good choices for key stage 4 studies. This includes an options booklet, parents evening and individual family meetings when appropriate. As a result, the number of pupils studying humanities and modern foreign languages, subjects that enable pupils to gain the EBacc (the group of subjects favoured by the government), is increasing.
- Pupils' careers education and guidance meets requirements in the main school, beginning in Year 9 with a group of local employers giving information. This is followed in Year 10 by two weeks of work experience. The range of placements available is extended through the school's financial support for pupils travelling to London. The Year 11 careers conference gives pupils good opportunities to gain awareness of local post-16 opportunities for study, employment or apprenticeships. 'Business breakfast' brings business students in the sixth form into direct contact with local enterprises. All this is useful, but delivered through a small number of collapsed timetable days, such as the financial capability day. This limits pupils' opportunities to consolidate their learning and the school's opportunities to check what pupils have learned.
- Leaders have high expectations for attendance. The school works hard to overcome a culture of below-average attendance. As a result, attendance is now above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is rapidly closing the gap on that of their peers.
- Staff at the school offer a wide variety of clubs, including music, gardening, performing arts and many sports. These opportunities contribute well to pupils' development.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning opportunities are widespread throughout the school, with a focus on teamwork and responsibility. Leaders of the 'community system' run charity events, themes for the week and assemblies which promote tolerance and understanding of topical issues.
- Leaders have ensured that a huge range of external providers are available to provide support to pupils with different needs. For example the school is a National Citizenship Service champion school.
- Pupils' personal development is not yet outstanding because they are over-reliant on being given direction by their teachers.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are attentive in lessons and show respect and courtesy to adults and to each other. Disruption to learning is rare and when it happens it is effectively dealt with by staff.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is also good. Transition between lessons is smooth and pupils enter the canteen in an orderly manner and socialise well. They are considerate to each other in the corridors and are polite and helpful to visitors.
- Pupils with specific needs are well served by the learner support unit because of the programme they follow and the skills of the staff.
- A new behaviour and rewards system is clear to staff and pupils. Pupils have confidence that consequences are followed up by teachers. The rewards system is increasing motivation and learning of pupils. For example, the 'lifestyle challenge' gives rewards for improving the environment and making healthy choices. Older pupils comment on how litter has reduced as a result.
- Leaders monitor the behaviour system regularly. Detentions are falling as the new system has become more established. The number of more serious sanctions such as fixed-term exclusions has also fallen, due to the early interventions built into the new system. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last three years.
- There are some instances of silly behaviour in the younger years. Parents and pupils told inspectors of this and inspectors observed it. The school works hard to instil good attitudes to learning in pupils, and behaviour improves sharply as pupils move up the school.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and that when it occurs it is dealt with quickly and decisively by school leaders. Pupils feel that they always have someone to talk to in the 'community system' and are reassured by the anonymous bullying buttons on the website.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are good

- Following a long history of mediocre achievement, pupils' progress has improved dramatically since the last published information. There were improvements in 2014, but in 2015 there was a fall in results that surprised school leaders and governors. A thorough investigation into this drop in outcomes was undertaken by governors. As a result of the actions that were undertaken, outcomes for 2016, such as the headline measure of pupils gaining five GCSE passes at grade A\* to C, including English and mathematics, are on track to be above the national average. External moderation and marking, actual coursework marks and inspectors' first-hand observation of work in lessons and books, support the school's own performance information and predictions that this will be the case.
- All year groups now join the school with attainment in English and mathematics broadly in line with the national average at key stage 2. However, around a quarter of pupils join the school with a reading ability that is considerably below that expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points has been below the national average by the end of Year 11 over the last three years. However, there has been a significant improvement. The school's progress information shows progress in a wide range of subjects and for all current pupils to be above average now. This is confirmed by the progress of pupils observed in lessons and seen over time in books. The school's monitoring information shows that progress in mathematics, English, languages and humanities is now better than the national average. Progress in science has improved and is now broadly average.
- In mathematics, the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils' attainment is narrowing because of the accelerating progress of these pupils as they move through the school.
- In 2015, pupils who left primary school with high attainment did not fulfil their potential. This year there has been greater focus on these pupils through the curriculum and through teachers addressing their needs in lessons. The 'further maths' course is an example of providing additional stretch for these pupils, giving them opportunities to extend their mathematics understanding and prepare for A-level study.
- In English, most pupils make progress that is better than the national average in all year groups. Pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs or disability make more than expected progress in all year groups. Pupils who are looked after by the local authority make good progress.
- Overall, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress and do well at the school. The provision made for them supports their learning highly effectively due to excellent leadership of this aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils receive good guidance on their next steps. As a result, the school is rightly proud that no Year 11 pupil was not in either education, training or employment.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## require improvement

- The progress of students is improving, but not quickly enough. Historical data shows variability in the outcomes for students on different courses. Improvements in the provision for current students are leading to greater consistency and improved progress. These improvements have been introduced too recently to have a full impact on Year 13 students and are having the greatest impact on Year 12 students. Leaders have raised the entrance requirements for some courses to ensure that students have the necessary ability to do well. Once students have chosen to join the sixth form they tend to stay, so retention rates are strong. Several students left Year 11 to attend post-provision in other schools and colleges and returned to continue their studies at Harwich and Dovercourt.
- Students with below-average prior attainment for level 3 study often secure university places or their desired employment. Vocational course outcomes have improved over the last three years and are broadly in line with national rates of progress. Students have not always been guided to take the most appropriate and realistic courses for their Year 11 achievement.
- Teachers work hard in lessons. They give students good feedback in lessons and on their written work. For example, in a media lesson, students were working diligently to improve their work as a result of very clear feedback and explicit instruction on how they could achieve the highest grade. In other lessons, teachers' hard work was less productive because students lacked the confidence to engage in debate or discussion. Attempts to introduce more effective use of learning time, by putting more responsibility on the students to come to lessons prepared with new knowledge, have been frustrated by students' over-reliance on being passive recipients of knowledge.
- Leaders are providing 16 to 19 study programmes that have improved significantly and now meet most of the requirements well. For example, half the students entering the sixth form who have not yet achieved at least a C grade in either GCSE English or mathematics make good progress, so by November they have achieved a grade C in these subjects. The one-year 'bridge' course is effective in providing a nurturing environment to increase the choices available for post-16 students who do not have the entry requirements for level 3 courses. Students are becoming increasingly aspirational in their university applications.
- The delivery of preparation for careers and work experience requires further development as it is not yet evident in all students' study programmes. Positive relationships with teachers and among students were observed both in and out of lessons. Sixth-form students are now more visible as part of the whole school community, but opportunities are missed to develop their skills and confidence through leadership opportunities.
- Sixth-form leadership is now having a highly positive impact. Physically moving the sixth form into the main school site has had many advantages. Learning time has increased as students now arrive on time to lessons. The quality of teaching is now monitored as part of the whole-school approach and faculty leaders now have clarity about their responsibility for post-16 provision. Links with other local schools provide a wider range of courses, enabling the sixth form to meet the needs and interests of a wider range of students. Attendance is good. Students are very positive about the sixth form. Enrichment activities are developing to improve students' confidence. They include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, enterprise activities, including stalls within the community market and a radio station (Harwich Waves). Thirteen students have committed to local citizenship-based projects in summer 2016 as a result of the school's champion school status for the National Citizenship Service.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137946
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011861

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	1,145
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	126
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Leggett
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Rob Garrett
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 245460
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hdhs.org.uk">www.hdhs.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@hdhs.org.uk">admin@hdhs.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20–21 May 2014

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils and students from minority ethnic backgrounds is low.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national averages.
- There is a higher than average percentage of girls.
- There is a higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority)
- The school has a below-average percentage of pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The school has an average percentage of pupils who have special educational needs or disability with a statement of need.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school works in partnership with North East Essex Alternative Provision School to offer alternative provision to 11 pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The school is a member of the North East Essex Education Partnership (NEEEP), a partnership with seven other local secondary schools.
- The school has had a falling roll for the last three years with a growing number of boys in key stage 3.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons, eight of which were seen jointly with a senior leader. In addition, several short visits were made to a range of lessons. Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtime, before and after school, in form time and assembly.
- At the time of the inspection pupils in Year 11 and students in Years 12 and 13 were involved in public examinations. Visits were made to the revision lessons for these year groups, but it was not possible to observe the full range of teaching.
- Meetings were held with senior, subject and other leaders, four groups of pupils and a group of sixth-form students, the chair and five members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the 110 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team scrutinised data about pupils' and students' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, reviewed minutes of the meetings of the governing body and scrutinised pupils' and students' work in lessons.

## Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Howard Lay	Ofsted Inspector
Patricia MacLachlan	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Webb	Her Majesty's Inspector

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