

# The Hereford Academy

Marlbrook Road, Redhill, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 7NG

## Inspection dates

20–21 November 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, governors and the trust have been too slow in addressing the decline in standards at this school. The trust has been ineffective in providing the support required to bring about urgently needed improvements.
- Many teachers have low expectations of, and aspirations for, their pupils. Pupils say that they feel as if some of their 'teachers do not care'.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), underachieve considerably across a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is weak. It does not enable pupils to close the large gaps, stemming from poor teaching over time, in their knowledge and understanding.
- It is too soon to judge the impact of the school's improved curriculum which now meets the needs and aspirations of many more pupils. However, as yet there is no planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.
- Leaders' analysis of how well pupils are achieving is not always accurate. As a result, they are not able to intervene quickly enough.
- Pupils' behaviour is poor. Pupils say that large proportions of their lessons are disrupted and as a result learning time is wasted.
- Not all pupils inspectors spoke to feel safe at school. Pupils, especially those in key stage 3, do not feel safe at school because of the poor behaviour of others.
- Attendance overall, including for disadvantaged pupils and sixth-form students, is too low. Therefore, too many pupils miss out on vital parts of their education.
- Leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent so that it has a positive impact on improving the outcomes of the groups of pupils the funding is intended for.
- Governors are not effective in fulfilling their delegated duties. They do not effectively hold leaders to account.
- Leaders have decided to close the sixth form this summer. Current provision is not adequate for those students still in Year 13.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and outcomes in art and physical education (PE) are strong. This is because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Improve urgently the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have consistently high aspirations for and expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - plan tasks that match closely pupils' needs and abilities so that tasks are not too easy or too difficult
  - consistently apply the school's behaviour and feedback policies
  - effectively check pupils' understanding in lessons
  - provide opportunities for the most able pupils to stretch and challenge their thinking and learning
  - provide tasks that engage pupils, deepen their learning and further their understanding, rather than simple tasks designed to keep pupils busy
  - improve provision, teaching and learning in the sixth form, even though this area is due to close after the summer term.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and the support from the trust so that there is rapid improvement in the achievement of all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, by ensuring that:
  - leaders focus on the most urgent improvement strategies and evaluate their effectiveness and impact on raising standards across the school
  - all leaders routinely and systematically analyse information about pupils, especially of groups of pupils, so that they can spot trends and patterns more quickly
  - teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are monitored and scrutinised more closely so that leaders are assured of the validity of information gathered and can intervene quickly to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding
  - the additional funding the school receives has a positive impact on the outcomes of those groups of pupils it is intended for
  - there is a planned programme put into action for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Urgently improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that all staff consistently apply the behaviour policy so that learning time is not wasted, and all pupils feel safe at school.
- Reduce the amount of time some pupils miss from their education due to being absent from school or internally isolated.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken

in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The school has been a sponsor-led academy of the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET) multi-academy trust (MAT) for almost five years. In that time, the trust has failed to provide adequate levels of support and resources to bring about urgently needed improvements. As a result, standards at the school have continued to decline considerably.
- The school has undergone great instability in its senior leadership team with a number of headteachers in post in recent years. The current executive headteacher and head of school are passionate about their school. Although they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they have acted too slowly to address weak teaching, low outcomes, poor behaviour and low attendance. This is partly due to the lack of support from the trust and lack of effective challenge from the local governing board.
- Senior leaders have very recently begun to implement a number of improvement strategies, such as raising achievement meetings and staff accountability meetings, which are showing tentative signs of making a difference. However, the impact of these actions on pupils' outcomes is yet to be seen.
- Leaders do not routinely and systematically analyse and evaluate the information they have about pupils, especially groups of pupils. Consequently, they are not able to spot any trends or patterns quickly enough to intervene in a timely manner.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, do not have an accurate view of how well current pupils at the school are achieving. This is because assessment information is not sufficiently well scrutinised and analysed to ensure the validity of information. Consequently, leaders are not able to address swiftly any weaknesses.
- Senior leaders, in the past, had an inaccurate view of the quality of teaching. Current leaders know that teaching is not effective enough to close pupils' gaps in knowledge and understanding. Information about teaching collected is now sharper and more accurate. This is because it is moderated and validated with the school's improvement partner. As a result, leaders can now pinpoint areas that need urgent attention, such as the teaching of science, English, mathematics and languages. However, there is no evidence of capacity within the school or MAT to address these shortcomings.
- The school's historic curriculum was ineffective and did not ensure that pupils made strong progress. The current curriculum is broad and offers a variety of appropriate courses. More pupils now take a range of academic and vocational courses that meet their needs and career aspirations. It is too soon to see the impact of the curriculum on improved outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' monitoring of the effectiveness of additional funding they receive, such as the pupil premium funding, is ineffective. Disadvantaged pupils have continued to perform poorly across a wide range of subjects in 2018. In the past, their progress was in the bottom 10% nationally. Current disadvantaged pupils continue to do less well than others. Action plans to address this lack detail and analysis. Therefore, leaders are not

able to identify whether the spending is having a positive impact on outcomes.

- Middle leaders are not yet effective enough in raising standards in their subject areas, with the exception of those for art and PE. The majority do not routinely analyse the information they collect or monitor effectively the quality of teaching within their subjects. Middle leaders do not effectively ensure the validity of the information teachers present to them.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is ineffective. There is currently no formalised programme to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social or cultural development.
- Leaders do not ensure that accurate attendance records are being kept. Records scrutinised during the inspection showed examples of codes that are not in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) guidelines on how to record attendance figures. For example, leaders incorrectly record the attendance of sixth-form students when they are at home for parts of the school day.
- Leaders' use of alternative provision is effective. Placements are chosen carefully for pupils who at risk of leaving education before the end of their courses. Leaders ensure that pupils are on suitable courses that meet their career aspirations and abilities. Pupils therefore finish their education and move on to appropriate destinations.

## **Governance of the school**

- The BAET MAT provides governance for its schools through the board of trustees and then further delegates duties to local governing boards. Over time, the trust has acted too slowly to stem the decline in the quality of education at this school.
- The board of trustees has not ensured that effective actions are taken to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance. Consequently, standards at the school have declined further.
- In discussion with inspectors, directors of the board of trustees and the diocese expressed views that they are not confident that the trust is able to support the school adequately because of limited funds and resources available to them.
- Governors of the local governing board have not fulfilled their delegated duties. They have not been effective in holding leaders to account for the low standards at the school. This is partly due to the lack of support and resources provided by the trust.
- Governors are dedicated and passionate about their school and want the very best for their pupils. However, they lack clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses to hold leaders to account effectively. For example, governors were shocked that pupils' behaviour is poor and is making some pupils feel unsafe.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- School leaders do not ensure that all pupils feel safe at school. Pupils, especially those in key stage 3, feel unsafe at school because of poor behaviour and incidents of bullying. They have expressed a concern that not all staff deal consistently well with

bullying or poor behaviour. Over a third of parents and carers who completed Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire said that their child does not feel safe at school and expressed bullying as a concern.

- The vast majority of staff are clear about who to refer any concerns on to. The safeguarding team works constructively with relevant external agencies. Safeguarding staff are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary.
- Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff during the recruitment process and keep accurate records.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- The quality of teaching over time is weak. It is not supporting pupils to close gaps in their knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged and those with SEND, do not make strong progress.
- Too many teachers have low expectations of and aspirations for their pupils. As a result, they do not believe that pupils can achieve. Teachers do not plan lessons that engage pupils. Consequently, pupils, including disadvantaged and pupils with SEND underperform in many subjects.
- When planning lessons, teachers do not take full account of pupils' abilities and individual needs. This means that many pupils find tasks too difficult and learn very little in lessons. For the same reason, the most able pupils do not consistently benefit from tasks that stretch and challenge them. Consequently, they underachieve in a wide range of subjects.
- As lessons proceed, teaching continues without teachers checking on how well pupils have understood what is being taught and whether their learning is moving on, or whether they are finding work too easy.
- Teachers do not select the most appropriate learning resources to engage pupils. This, together with work that is either too hard or too easy for them, results in pupils becoming disengaged from their learning. When this happens, pupils engage in low-level disruption and/or poor behaviour, which hinders the learning of all pupils and wastes valuable learning time.
- Leaders and teachers use a range of assessments to ascertain how well pupils are achieving. The information collected is not sufficiently well scrutinised by middle leaders to check its validity. Work is not sufficiently well moderated to ensure its accuracy. Information on pupils' progress that was shared during the inspection was overgenerous and did not give an accurate view of how well current pupils at the school are achieving. Leaders have very recently introduced measures to improve this aspect. However, it is too soon to see an impact of this work in improved outcomes for pupils.
- There is a lack of consistency across the school in teachers applying agreed policies such as the behaviour policy and the feedback policy. As a result, pupils disregard school rules and their progress is not improving.
- The monitoring of teaching, in the past, was not effective. It lacked precision and

accuracy and leaders had an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching. Leaders now, with the support of the school's improvement adviser, analyse the quality of teaching more effectively. As a result, leaders now know the strengths in teaching and where improvements are most urgently needed. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching currently at the school.

- Teaching in art and PE is more effective than in other subjects. In these subjects, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and their behaviour. Teachers routinely match the learning to pupils' needs and use a range of strategies to check how well pupils are achieving. As a result, outcomes in art and PE are better than those seen in other subjects and are in line with national averages.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The programme to promote pupils' personal development is not consistently effective enough. This is due to the limited capacity within the school's leadership team. This aspect of the school's work is not securely anchored in the curriculum to make up for some of the deficit. As a result, pupils do not have a sound understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law or democracy.
- Teachers' low aspirations for and expectations of pupils make them feel undervalued. Some pupils expressed the opinion that teachers at the school 'do not care' about them. Others said that teachers' inconsistent approach to dealing with poor behaviour or bullying is 'unfair'.
- In contrast, pupils and parents expressed praise for the pastoral support in the school's behaviour and inclusion unit. Pupils feel valued and listened to and say that support staff in the unit care about them when they have a problem and help to resolve it.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Too many pupils engage in behaviour that either makes other pupils feel unsafe or behaviour that stops the learning of others. Pupils say that large proportions of their lessons per week are disrupted to the extent that learning is completely halted. As a result, pupils miss valuable learning time. Pupils, parents and staff express concerns about the behaviour of some pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. They are over-reliant on senior leaders to sort behaviour out for them. Consequently, pupils do not adhere to rules. Low-level disruption is not rare and when it occurs, it is not dealt with swiftly. For example, the school operates a procedure whereby pupils who misbehave in lesson are sent to a colleague within the vicinity. This practice is not effective because occasionally the same pupils then continue to disrupt another lesson and the learning of a greater number is negatively affected.
- Attendance overall and for groups of pupils is low and not improving. Too many pupils

are persistently absent from school. As a result, they miss big chunks of their education. Exclusions have fallen sharply in recent times. This is because incidents in which pupils are internally isolated have increased. For example, during the time of the inspection inspectors saw evidence that pupils had been internally isolated for at least two weeks without being reintegrated into regular lessons.

- It is not possible to say whether incidents of internal isolation, over time, are decreasing. This is because record-keeping of who is isolated, for what reason and for how long are not accurately kept.
- Behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtime was heavily supervised during the time of the inspection. Pupils reported that behaviour normally is not good and characterised by 'boisterous behaviour, pushing and shoving'. Inspectors saw examples of older pupils showing no regard to younger ones when walking past them on staircases or in the dinner hall. During the inspection, staff described behaviour as typically poor around the school and in lessons.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils currently at the school, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, are underachieving. This is because of weak teaching and low expectations. These are evident in the quality of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and languages. Pupils achieve well in art and PE.
- Pupils' progress in 2017 was well below national averages in a range of subjects, including mathematics, English, science and humanities. Unvalidated achievement information for 2018 suggests a further decline in standards, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The information also suggests that pupils made much better progress in art and PE in 2018.
- Disadvantaged pupils, historically and those currently in school, do not achieve well. The progress they make is significantly below that of other pupils with similar starting points. This is due to low expectations, the ineffective use of the pupil premium funding and these pupils being absent from school more often than others.
- Leaders' information about how well pupils are currently achieving is not always accurate. This is because the information is not sufficiently well analysed, moderated and validated. As a result, leaders, including middle leaders, are not able to intervene quickly enough to address any underperformance. Senior leaders have very recently begun to put steps in place to ensure the validity of the information teachers provide. However, it is too early to see the impact of this on pupils' outcomes. The provision for independent careers advice and guidance is successful at key stage 4, but is ineffective in the sixth form. Pupils receive detailed information about career options available to them, especially in key stage 4. During the time of the inspection, pupils were given mock college interviews by members of the local governing board to help ready pupils for their future. Although given helpful advice on future career pathways, for many pupils, preparation for their next steps is marred by underachievement in both academic subjects and personal development.



## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Inadequate

- The trust, governors and leaders have made the decision to cease the operation of a 16 to 19 programme of study at this school. There are currently 25 students in Year 13 who are finishing their courses before the sixth form closes in the summer term.
- Leadership of the sixth form is weak. Leaders have low expectations of the 25 students who are still completing their courses. The aspirations for these students are low. The provision students receive is inadequate.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is weak, attendance is low and students do not make the progress they should. Students complete a range of level 2 and 3 qualifications.
- Students do not benefit from any formal out-of-lesson work experience or work-related learning and personal development education. The provision for careers advice and guidance is non-existent. As a result, students are not prepared well for their next steps.

## School details

Unique reference number	135662
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10067156

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	678
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Clark
Headteacher	Phil Poulton
Telephone number	01432 373 570
Website	<a href="http://www.theherefordacademy.org.uk/">www.theherefordacademy.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@theherefordacademy.org.uk">admin@theherefordacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018

## Information about this school

- This school is a sponsor-led academy. The sponsor is the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust (BAET) multi-academy trust.
- The overall responsibility for the school lies with the board of trustees. Each school within the MAT is governed by a local governing board.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are on SEN support is well above the national average.

The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.

- At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an executive headteacher, who is at the school three days a week, and a head of school.
- There are currently a few pupils from key stage 4 on alternative provision placements at the 'HUB 3' hospital school and 'Aconbury KS3 referral unit'.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation. This included the school’s self-evaluation and action plans, school policies, information about pupils’ attainment and progress, behaviour, attendance, exclusions and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons across a wide range of subjects and key stages. They observed pupils’ behaviour between lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors evaluated the work in pupils’ books and folders in lessons across a range of year groups and subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, and teachers, including those who are newly qualified. Inspectors also met with directors of the board of trustees of the BAET MAT and the diocese.
- The views of parents were considered through the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, as well as the 20 free-text comments parents provided.
- Inspectors held three formal, and numerous informal, discussions with pupils throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing board.

## Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Caroline Hoddinott	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Lord	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Yates	Her Majesty’s Inspector

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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.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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