

Hassenbrook Academy

Hassenbrook Road, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 0NS

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has experienced considerable staffing and leadership changes since it opened. Until recently, this has hindered leaders' ability to bring consistent improvements in the school's provision.
- In 2018, higher-attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.
- Although there are signs of improvement, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable to ensure that current pupils make consistently good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attend or achieve as well as they should. Leaders, governors and the trust are not using the additional funding that they receive to improve standards quickly for these pupils.
- Leaders have worked hard to recruit staff with specialist expertise to help plan and teach a broad curriculum. This has largely, but not yet entirely, been successful.
- On occasion, leaders' processes and records about the welfare and attendance of pupils, most notably in alternative education, are not precise enough or well reviewed.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils is not always managed well. This can disrupt learning for other pupils.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully effective in their roles in raising standards in their areas.
- Too many pupils do not exhibit a pride in how they complete and present their work.
- Pupils do not have a well-developed understanding of the risks of extremism.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, appointed in January 2017 and supported by other senior leaders, is driving forwards improvements in the school. She is being well supported by governors and the trust.
- The governing body has a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently strong in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders in monitoring attendance, welfare and alternative provision so that all information is precisely recorded
 - centralising and using records more effectively so that leaders have a mutual understanding about the quality of welfare provision in the school
 - developing middle leadership so that these leaders have a precise understanding about the impact of their work on raising standards
 - increasing the rigour with which the trust and governors are holding leaders to account about the additional funding that they receive, including the pupil premium funding.
- Raise standards by:
 - sharpening teachers' use of assessment to plan learning that meets the needs of the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND so that they make better progress and achieve higher standards
 - improving teachers' subject expertise in subjects other than English and mathematics so that they are confident in the planning, questioning and discussion of the subject matter being taught
 - ensuring that staff are skilled in managing behaviour in lessons so that learning time is maximised
 - raising expectations about what pupils are capable of achieving, including expectations about how pupils complete and present their work.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - raising pupils' expectations about acceptable behaviour in and out of lessons
 - continuing the recent work to promote regular attendance and reduce absence, especially for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that pupils have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the risks of extremism.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since academisation in September 2016, leaders at all levels have not ensured that pupils have achieved well enough. While the trust strengthened leadership capacity in the first instance, significant changes in staffing and leadership have hampered leaders' abilities to bring sustained improvements.
- Weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment have not been fully addressed. As a result, since opening, too many pupils in Year 11 have not made the good progress of which they are capable. This includes high-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- During this time, the trust has been unable to prevent some parents and carers from losing confidence in the school. As a result, a significant number have withdrawn their children from the school and enrolled them elsewhere. About three quarters of those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, now believe that the school is well led and said that they would now recommend the school.
- The headteacher, who was appointed in January 2017, with the support of the trust, has added impetus to the school's improvement. She has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Suitable plans are in place to raise achievement, improve behaviour and attendance and strengthen the leadership of curriculum subjects. However, it is not yet possible to see the full impact of this work.
- The strongest curriculum teams collaborate well to plan lessons but high-quality planning is not consistent in all subject areas. Where practice is strongest, middle leaders routinely check the progress pupils make in their curriculum subjects and plan how to make sustainable improvements. These approaches are not yet consistently in place, particularly with new or less-experienced middle leaders.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used well enough to improve the outcomes and attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Their attainment and progress have remained low compared to other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. A significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent. This has contributed to their underachievement.
- The school plans for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the British values through the curriculum and in tutor time. Leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality and impact of this provision. For example, although staff have training on the government's anti-extremism 'Prevent' duty, pupils have limited knowledge or understanding of the danger of extremism.
- An initiative funded by the Department for Education to mentor and coach teachers at the start of their careers is having a positive impact. Newly and recently qualified teachers feel that they are well supported by leaders, both informally and through a structured programme of professional development.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not ensured that additional funding to support pupils' progress is used effectively. Pupil premium funding is not ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make rapid and sustained progress. In addition, governors have not ensured that additional funding for Year 7 pupils to catch up in their literacy and numeracy is making a difference to most of these pupils.
- In other respects, however, members of the governing body have a secure understanding of the majority of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school regularly and use information about the school's performance to ask pertinent questions of leaders. Governors use their different skills to support, and increasingly challenge, leaders in their running of the school.
- Governors check safeguarding arrangements. They visit the school regularly to make formal and informal checks on the school's protocols and practice.
- A rapid improvement plan, based on the school's improvement planning, has been implemented by school leaders this year. This is designed to improve outcomes for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to improve the quality of teaching and to strengthen leadership. This plan is monitored by trust leaders, governors and the headteacher to ensure that priorities are tackled and actions lead to improvement. It is too early to see the impact of this plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that they undertake all legal checks when recruiting staff to work with pupils. The single central record of checks on staff is accurate and well maintained. Records show that all the necessary checks have been made when making recent appointments of staff.
- Staff receive routine training in safeguarding, which references the most up-to-date guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty, for all staff. They use this training appropriately to make referrals to the designated safeguarding leaders in the school.
- Designated safeguarding leaders act on concerns appropriately. They liaise well with external agencies, such as social services, the police and the local authority's safeguarding team, to ensure that vulnerable pupils get multi-agency support.
- Pupils feel safe and they told inspectors that they know who they could talk to if they have a concern. The majority of parents responding to Parent View agree that pupils are safe.
- Despite the secure foundations of safeguarding, on occasion, leaders' records are not well maintained. Most notably, this weakness exists in the records about a few pupils in alternative provision. On occasion, the school information is not coordinated well enough so that all leaders maintain a detailed overview at all times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is wide variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within and across subjects.
- Turbulence in staffing mid-year has resulted in a shortage of staff specialist knowledge in some subjects. Too often, staff do not use a strong understanding of the subject to plan effective sequences in learning over time. This means that pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to build on their prior knowledge and apply their learning well enough.
- Where pupils' learning is weaker, planned activities do not capture and retain pupils' interests. Where this occurs, teachers' expectations are not high enough about what pupils can achieve and teachers provide low levels of challenge in the activities that they set. Too often, teachers accept poor presentation and poorly organised work. Consequently, in these lessons, pupils waste time by chatting to friends or not concentrating on their learning.
- In non-core subjects, too many teachers do not use assessment information to plan challenging learning that is matched to the different abilities of all pupils. In particular, the most able pupils are not challenged to work hard, think for themselves and work for sustained periods of time without support. As a result, the progress that these pupils make is too slow.
- Teachers do not use the most up-to-date information about pupils with SEND to plan learning that helps them to make good progress over time. Inspection evidence found that work in the books of many pupils with SEND was poorly presented and sometimes illegible. Teachers are not routinely acting to address these issues. There is a lack of next-step planning to ensure that these pupils make better progress or build on the learning across lessons.
- School leaders have identified that poor literacy skills, including reading, are a barrier to many pupils making better progress. Strategies for making improvements in these areas are at an early stage of development.
- Where pupils' learning is stronger, most notably in English and mathematics, teachers use effective behaviour management strategies which create a positive working environment. These teachers plan activities that secure pupils' subject knowledge and develop their confidence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The provision for and attendance of a small number of vulnerable pupils, including some who access alternative provision, are not precisely monitored by leaders. Leaders do not know if they are meeting the welfare needs of these pupils fully.
- Pupils are familiar with values such as democracy, tolerance and respect, but have a weaker understanding of other aspects, such as the dangers of extremism and

radicalisation and county lines. As a result, they are not as fully prepared for life as citizens in modern Britain as they should be.

- Disadvantaged pupils attend school less well than other pupils and the attendance of some remains stubbornly low, despite the best efforts of pastoral leaders.
- Attendance for the rest of the school cohort is improving because leaders are diligent in maintaining up-to-date information about attendance. Pupils whose attendance is causing concern are immediately referred to pastoral leaders, who quickly follow up reasons for absence with pupils, their parents or outside agencies as required.
- Pupils respond well when they are praised for their attendance, punctuality and tidy appearance. They were excited to tell inspectors about the rewards system in the school for good attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school's monitoring records show that, this year, fewer pupils are being referred to the internal isolation room compared to last year. Pupils told inspectors that the work that they are required to do when in isolation is often not challenging enough.
- Behaviour is improving following the introduction of a new behaviour policy which balances sanctions and rewards for good behaviour. However, there is still low-level disruption in some lessons. Pupils told inspectors that learning is slowed by off-task behaviour in some non-core curriculum subjects.
- Pupils are concerned that inconsistent approaches to behaviour management by some staff mean that a small number of pupils continue to misbehave.
- Reports of bullying have reduced, and most pupils believe that instances are dealt with well because there are effective pastoral support teams in all year groups.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of pupils between the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 for the last two years has been below average. Leaders have identified groups of pupils that have not performed well, specifically disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and high-attaining pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make much less progress than other pupils nationally. Until recently, teachers have not focused sufficient attention on these pupils, and leaders have not allocated additional funding well enough to promote their achievement.
- Progress in humanities and subjects such as physical education (PE) and drama has been consistently low over two years, particularly among high-attaining and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' actions are not yet securing stronger outcomes for current pupils.
- Year 11 pupils attained well in mathematics in 2018. Current pupils across the key stages enjoy mathematics because the learning is well structured and pupils know how to make progress. Progress in mathematics has been a consistent strength over two years.

- Strong leadership in English is driving improvement in pupils' outcomes in key stage 3. For example, pupils in Year 7 now make a good start in English and are confident readers. Attainment in Year 11 English improved significantly in 2018, although it was still below the national average.
- Leaders' current focus on improving standards in English, mathematics and science is helping pupils to make more rapid progress in these subjects. At the same time, progress remains weaker in subjects such as history, art, drama, PE and modern languages.
- In January 2019, the school started work on a development project to help teachers better understand how to judge the progress of pupils in foundation curriculum subjects. This work is currently at an early stage and not yet fully embedded.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is now monitored by senior leaders. As a result, adjustments have been made to the school's curriculum offer and to the support which these pupils receive in lessons. The quality of support to help pupils with SEND make progress is inconsistent and, therefore, current pupils with SEND do not make good progress over time.

School details

Unique reference number	143424
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10087457

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	477
Appropriate authority	Ortu Federation
Chair of local governing body	Philip Burr
Headteacher	Joanne Williams
Telephone number	01375 671 566
Website	www.ortu.org
Email address	admin@hassenbrook.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- The Hassenbrook Academy became an academy in September 2017 when it joined the Ortu multi-academy trust (MAT). The MAT is a partnership of two secondary schools, two primary schools and a sixth-form college.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to the pupil premium is above average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is low.
- A small number of pupils are in education in off-site provision at The Olive Academy, Treetops School or BEP Academy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by three Ofsted inspectors over two days.
- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from 30 lesson observations, some carried out with the headteacher or a senior leader, and short visits to lessons. Inspectors also reviewed work in pupils' books, held discussions with pupils and staff and had meetings with staff, governors, trustees and the chief executive officer of the MAT.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website, documents and assessment information, as well as making general observations of the daily operations of the school, including social areas.
- Inspectors analysed the 42 standard responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jenny Carpenter, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Leach	Ofsted Inspector

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