

Ash Hill Academy

Ash Hill, Hatfield, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN7 6JH

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- In 2012, attainment was low and progress was weak at GCSE due to a history of underachievement. Some students lack basic skills in literacy.
- Teaching is not consistently good and too little is outstanding. Expectations are not always precise enough to motivate and challenge students. Occasionally, mundane tasks limit students' engagement and result in their slower progress. Marking is inconsistent.
- In 2012, achievement at A and AS level was weak. The sixth form requires improvement because students have not always been placed on appropriate courses and they do not develop study skills well enough.
- A few students lack the skills and self-confidence to work independently and engage well in learning. In some classes, their behaviour distracts other students from their learning. A very few poorly behaved students need better provision.
- Middle leaders, some of whom are new to their role, are not consistently effective in bringing about improvements to teaching and learning. The monitoring of teaching requiring improvement is not sufficiently robust. Performance management is not linked strongly enough to student progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The increased proportion of good teaching has improved the quality of learning. Lessons are generally well planned with clear criteria for students to judge their success and good use of resources to support learning.
- Current students are making sound progress in English and mathematics in all year groups. Rates of progress have increased significantly in mathematics. Attainment has risen and is on track for further improvement at GCSE level and in the sixth form.
- The leadership of the new academy has improved the quality of teaching, the curriculum, achievement, attendance and behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 43 lessons, including six jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at examples of students' work. They also considered the quality of marking and written feedback to students.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, senior and subject leaders, a representative of the sponsor and four members of the governing body, including the Chair. They held discussions with four groups of students about the quality of their educational experience.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the school's own data on students' current progress, monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team also took account of the 25 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), a telephone call from a parent, and 16 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pankaj Gulab

Additional Inspector

Paul Copping

Additional Inspector

Sheila Kaye

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ash Hill Academy opened in September 2011 and is sponsored by the School Partnership Trust Academies. It was formerly Hatfield Visual Arts College.
- All the staff from the predecessor school were appointed to the new academy, including the Principal.
- It is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form. The sixth form is run in collaboration with the partner academies.
- Almost half the students are supported by the pupil premium, which is high. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Alternative provision is managed by the School Partnership Trust Academies and includes Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 centres at other academies and vocational providers, including Engage and Open Cast.
- In 2012, the academy met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning, especially in English mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that precise and challenging expectations, clear explanations and regular checks on students' understanding, consistently motivate students and increase the pace of learning in lessons
 - consistently providing stimulating and practical tasks that inspire students and accurately meet their needs
 - ensuring that marking and feedback are consistently good
 - making sure that students understand key words and develop their skills in writing across different subjects.
- Raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that all groups of students consistently make good progress in all year groups, especially in English, mathematics and science
 - improving students' basic skills in reading, writing and spelling
 - making sure that students are placed on appropriate courses at AS and A level and develop their study skills more successfully.
- Improve behaviour and attendance by:
 - strengthening students' resilience, self-confidence and skills for learning
 - increasing the range of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - enhancing the provision for the most challenging and disaffected students

- further reducing persistent absence.

■ Improve leadership and management by:

- increasing the effectiveness of middle leaders in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning
- ensuring that the monitoring of teaching requiring improvement is more robust and results in its more rapid improvement to good
- continuing to tackle and hence eradicate the remaining very small amount of inadequate teaching
- making a more explicit link between the progress made by students and the performance management of staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2012, attainment was significantly below average. Boys' attainment was exceptionally low in English and mathematics. In mathematics, the gap between students known to be eligible for free school meals and other students was much wider than average. Students supported by school action plus gained few qualifications as a result of taking a non accredited vocational course.
- As a result of changes brought about by the academy since it opened, attainment has begun to improve significantly. In 2012, there was a marked increase in the proportion of students gaining 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. Reliably accurate data shows that there is likely to be a further improvement in 2013. Progress in mathematics was weak but has accelerated significantly. Twice as many students in the current Year 11 have made the expected progress in mathematics compared with the predecessor school. The academy is on track to make marked improvements at GCSE English, mathematics and science this summer. Results from early entry GCSE in mathematics in 2013 shows that that the current Year 11 has gained more Grade C results or better than at this point last year. Early entry is being used to maximise achievement at all grades.
- In 2012, students made poor progress from their starting points at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics, humanities and GCSE science. Boys, students supported by the pupil premium, and students supported by school action plus underachieved.
- In the current Year 11, boys, students known to be eligible for free school meals and students with special educational needs have made better progress in English and mathematics and are achieving more qualifications. Academy data indicates that the attainment gap in English and mathematics between Year 11 students eligible for the pupil premium and others has reduced. Teacher assessment indicates that in all year groups overall progress in English and mathematics has improved and is in line with national expectations. This was confirmed by the topics and levels of work in lessons observed.
- Pupil premium funds have provided a wide range of interventions to improve eligible students' engagement and attendance, provide coaching in mathematics and English, and support educational visits. Academy checks show that persistent absence has been reduced and that a new catch-up programme in Year 7 has resulted in a promising improvement in reading.
- Students are willing to learn. They are generally cooperative and work well when given precise direction and an interesting practical task. Some are keen; others lack confidence or skills in literacy.
- In 2012, sixth form students made inadequate progress at A and AS level. English and media studies were particularly weak at both A and AS level due to lack of experience in teaching A level subjects. Staff have improved their communication of course requirements to students and rectified weaknesses in exam preparation. Improved checking of progress and quicker intervention to support those struggling has improved the progress of current students. External checks indicate that current students are making better progress in A and AS level subjects. Students make expected progress on vocational Level 3 courses, and Level 2 courses, mainly taught at other academies in the consortium.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good and has not been good for long enough. Too little is outstanding. In some lessons the expectations of what students should achieve are not set out with sufficient clarity or precision. Some tasks are mundane, lack purpose and are not matched to the varied the abilities in the class which slows the pace of learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed to give explanations of key words and skills, to check and explore students'

understanding and to consider what different students need to move forward. On occasion, teachers resort to disciplinary measures when their lesson is not sufficiently engaging. In the better teaching, the strong relationship between the teacher and students with well established routines create a positive climate for learning and good engagement by students. In general, teachers adopt an effective and systematic approach to setting objectives and identifying the criteria for students to succeed at different levels of ability. The careful sequencing of timed tasks include an element of choice and are supported by interesting and well produced visual resources, which enables students to concentrate purposely in a practical task. Open questioning successfully encourages thinking. Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals. Learning coaches usefully play an active role in leading the learning of small groups within a lesson.

- The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent across different subjects. In the better lessons, self and peer assessment are used constructively to promote students' understanding and independence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Behaviour requires improvement because there are too many examples of students' behaviour getting in the way of their own and other students' learning. In most cases this is not serious but it is distracting.
- The academy has a very few disengaged students whose behaviour includes violence, rudeness and defiance. The academy works creatively with local agencies and other academies within the School Partnership Trust to provide positive educational and therapeutic experiences for these students. Plans are in place to extend this provision. Currently, it is not effective enough in dealing with this very small group of disaffected students who make up a large proportion of the temporary and repeat exclusions. No students have been permanently excluded.
- Most students are polite, courteous and friendly. A few occasionally display a lack of respect for staff. In general, they are proud of the academy and its higher standards of behaviour. Rates of exclusion are lower than in the predecessor school but have risen in the last year, in part due to the setting of higher expectations, and in part due to the more extreme behaviour of a small minority.
- The academy tackles bullying in all its forms, including racism and homophobia. Students said they felt safe and confident of adult help when needed.
- Attendance has improved steadily and is now just below the national average. Persistent absence has reduced but remains above average. Attendance in the sixth form is high. Attendance is accounted for well at Key Stages 3 and 4, at off-site provision and the sixth form.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have improved achievement in English and mathematics and attendance has risen. The amount of good teaching has increased. Inadequate teaching has been tackled effectively but not eradicated entirely. Behaviour is better than at the predecessor school.
- The Principal has increased the pace of the academy's improvement by strengthening the ownership and accountability of staff for the quality of their teaching and their students' learning through well structured procedures. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest and leads to well focused action. Senior leaders have robustly tackled weaker teaching by providing formal targeted support and deadlines linked to performance management. Performance management assesses staff against the teacher standards and pay awards since the academy was formed have satisfied the criteria for good teaching. Few current performance objectives are linked to measures of student progress. A professional development programme for improving teaching that requires improvement has increased the amount of good teaching. This programme is not

being monitored robustly enough to ensure that improvement is rapid and consistent.

- The analysis of assessment data provides regular and comprehensive information to subject leaders who have used it increasingly well to review progress in subjects and year groups and to identify individuals and groups who need extra support. Subject leaders have taken responsibility for analysing and accounting for student progress and explaining the impact of actions. Some key middle leaders are new to their role and require further support and development.
- The curriculum has been improved by increasing the amount of time for English and mathematics, increasing the number of students taking GCSE subjects including science, and reducing the numbers following non accredited alternative courses at Key Stage 4. The sixth form partnership with other local academies provides a broad range of courses for a wide range of interests and abilities. Opportunities for students to extend their horizons and enhance their academic learning are supported well through the pupil premium. However, opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not extensive.
- The Principal is highly visible to staff and students and he is both respected and liked. He is outward looking and communicates well with parents. Engagement with local primary schools has improved the academy's reputation in the community.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Schools Partnership Trust Academies has taken responsibility for the management of premises and resources which has enabled the leadership team to focus on the core business of improving teaching and learning. The academy trust provides an effective framework for leadership and staff development through a wide range of professional activities supported by partner academies. The trust also provides a robust system of performance management for the Principal. The sound advice and firm challenge provided by the trust's school improvement officer has contributed well to the development of the academy.
 - Governors are well informed about the progress being made on raising achievement and the impact of the pupil premium funding. They understand the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and the use of performance management for pay. They meet regularly with a range of senior leaders to discuss and question the impact of actions. A parent forum has improved communication between parents and the academy. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137066
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	399849

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

Type of school	Academy Sponsor Led
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	832
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cris Le-Voguer
Principal	David Williams
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01302 840961
Fax number	01302 845906
Email address	info@ashhillacademy.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

