

Hadley Learning Community - Secondary Phase

Waterloo Road, Hadley, Telford, TF1 5NU

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. They are keen to learn and all groups make good progress from their mostly low starting points.
- Most teaching is good or outstanding. Students say how much they appreciate the support and encouragement of their teachers and their willingness to give them extra help.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and often exemplary. Students take pride in their school and say that adults keep them safe.
- The effectiveness of the Queensway HLC Autistic Unit is good. Students are well cared for and good teaching is enabling them to achieve well.
- The inspirational principal works in close partnership with the headteacher and senior team who share her vision for the school that focuses strongly on promoting students' achievement and well-being.
- Senior leaders are very well supported by the governing body who provide outstanding support and challenge.
- Leaders have been relentless in improving the quality of teaching and have successfully eradicated inadequate practice.
- Well-established procedures ensure students' safety, and the care and support provided for students facing challenging circumstances is exemplary.
- The school shows a strong capacity to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of teachers do not plan in sufficient detail to ensure that tasks fully match the variety of individual needs of their students, particularly those of highest ability. As a result these students sometimes find tasks too easy.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Some teachers do not sufficiently inform students how to reach their challenging targets, provide them with opportunities to respond to this advice or give them time in lessons to do so.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with two of the school’s senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, the school’s local authority improvement partner, governors and staff, including subject leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at policies, the school’s own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and its development planning, minutes of governing body meetings, records of lesson monitoring, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students’ work.
- The views of 21 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. A telephone conversation took place with one parent. Inspectors also took account of 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Beverley Mabey

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, while the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is above average, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. A high proportion of students speak English as an additional language including new arrivals from Eastern Europe who are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average.
- Twenty-six students follow a variety of full- or part-time alternative courses at Telford College of Arts and Technology, Walford College, Lord Silkin, Nova Training and AFC Telford United.
- The majority of students are entered for mathematics GCSE during their final year while a small number are entered in Year 10.
- The school meets the current government floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club every morning.
- The proportion of students who arrive at the school at times other than the start of Year 7 is above average.
- The Hadley Learning Community includes primary and special school provision managed by the same governing body. In addition there is children's centre provision managed by the local authority. The secondary phase only was inspected during this inspection.
- The school took over the management of the off-site Queensway HLC Autistic Unit on 1 September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move all teaching to consistently good or outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what their students can achieve and plan in sufficient detail to meet the needs of different abilities within their classes, particularly the highest attainers, so that they are appropriately challenged
 - teachers consistently check that students respond to advice on how to reach their challenging targets, by practising a skill or trying another challenge and providing time in lessons for them to do so.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students typically enter the school with basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics that are well below the national average. The proportion of higher attaining students entering the school is consistently well below average. Over recent years the proportion of Year 11 students gaining 5 good GCSE passes including English and mathematics has gradually risen although this remains below average. Current assessments indicate that attainment will rise again by the end of the current school year.
- Over recent years, the proportion of students making expected rates of progress compares well to national levels in English and mathematics. The proportion making accelerated progress in English rose strongly in 2013 and is now close to national expectations. The proportion making this rate of progress in mathematics however fell in 2013 as a result of an exceptional proportion of students in this year group facing challenging personal circumstances. Leaders' rigorous tracking shows that students from Years 7 to 11 are now making good progress in both English and mathematics.
- Lesson observations during the inspection confirm that students enjoy their learning and are making good progress in all year groups. Students from all ethnic backgrounds are making similar rates of progress. Those who speak English as an additional language, particular those who arrived during Key Stage 4 from Eastern Europe at an early stage of learning English, make exceptional progress by the end of Year 11 as a result of the specialist support they receive.
- Students in the resource unit for Autistic children are now achieving well as a result of the good teaching and expert care they are now receiving.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported and are currently making good progress. They receive expert support both in lessons from specialist teaching assistants and in small groups. The 'Rainbows' nurture group supports the most vulnerable students to ensure that they develop the confidence, social and learning skills, to be gradually integrated into mainstream classes.
- Year 7 catch-up funding enables students arriving with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills to be taught by primary experts in the 'Team 6/7' area. They benefit from being taught in small groups, providing the individual support that promotes their good achievement. They are well taught and encouraged by their teachers, promoting their confidence and establishing high expectations for concentration and working together as a team.
- Well-established strategies are in place to help to accelerate students' reading. A systematic approach provides effective support throughout Key Stage 3 and beyond. This results in most students making good progress in reading. Students are regularly encouraged to read out loud and there is a strong focus in all subjects on the promotion of technical language. For example, in a Year 9 music lesson, students enjoyed showing their understanding of different DJ'ing techniques and explaining technical terms to each other. The school library is light, airy and well-stocked and is very well used by students of all ages.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide a wide range of resources that appropriately focus on promoting study skills and ensuring well-being. This includes support for attendance, the provision of learning mentors and pupil premium managers, and holiday and after school booster sessions. This support successfully promotes the achievement and well-being of this group, many of whom face very challenging circumstances.

- The attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below that achieved by this group nationally in English and mathematics. In 2013 the average GCSE grade of these students was a term behind their classmates. The gap in the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress is rapidly closing in English but less so in mathematics in 2013 due to the unprecedented number of students in this year group facing exceptionally difficult personal circumstances. The school's current data for Years 7 to 11 show that the gap is rapidly closing for all ability levels.
- Students following alternative courses achieve well as the result of the practical and appropriate courses provided and the close effective support they receive.
- Students enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. They receive constant encouragement from adults generating increased self-confidence and resulting in students' rising aspirations and positive attitudes to learning. One student commented, 'The school helps us to achieve our dreams.'

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders' rigorous checking on the quality of teaching shows that most is good or outstanding. This was confirmed by inspection evidence. There remains, however, a small proportion of teaching that still requires improvement.
- Students told inspectors that the teaching they receive is good and that they value the encouragement they receive. They say that teachers are patient and will explain things in many different ways until they understand. They also value the time teachers give during lesson 6 to provide individual support.
- Teachers across subjects focus strongly on promoting independence and boosting self-confidence, often providing easy ways of remembering things. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, students were observed making outstanding progress as a result of their teachers' high expectations and frequent exhortation to 'Show me you are an A grade student!' The teacher's expert subject knowledge ensured that tasks were appropriately challenging and enabled students to develop their independence and take responsibility for their own learning through discussing their ideas with each other and using a range of well-prepared resources.
- Leaders are establishing effective assessment practice across the whole school. Most teachers use assessment well to plan tasks that will address areas of weakness. They know their students well and will challenge and support them appropriately. However some students are unclear about their targets and marking of their work does not always make it clear what they need to do to achieve them. Although they are increasingly provided with opportunities to respond to teachers' comments by correcting their work or trying another challenge, this is not consistent across all subjects and students are not always given time in lessons to respond in this way.
- Teachers in all subjects promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, by providing opportunities to build self-esteem and for teamwork. For example in a Year 8 dance lesson, students were observed performing at an extremely high standard, with all students giving of their best and working closely together in pairs, developing their skills and stamina. This was because of the inspirational role models, not only of their teacher but the way gifted and talented students were also used to lead the group.
- Teaching assistants are used well and provide effective classroom support but also know when

to stand back and enable students to try themselves.

- A minority of teachers do not plan tasks in enough detail to ensure that they sufficiently match the variety of individual abilities within their class. This results in the most-able students finding the work too easy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour in lessons is consistently good and often exemplary. They show extremely positive attitudes towards their learning and show enthusiasm and commitment, particularly when they work together in pairs or groups, where students of all abilities are fully engaged in their learning.
- Behaviour around the school is calm and students are polite and courteous. Inspectors were impressed by the number of students who directed them around the school or held doors open as a matter of course. These good manners contribute strongly to school life and the success of those who attend alternative provision. There is an evident mutual respect and warmth between adults and students throughout the school, who are known well. The school is a harmonious community where those of different ethnic backgrounds get on well together.
- Students say that the school keeps them very safe. They know that they can 'leave their troubles at the school gate' because they will be well cared for and supported within school. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, but say that it is rare and that adults will 'quickly sort it out.' Students told inspectors that the school takes swift action to prevent racism or homophobia. They particularly value the support of the community support officer who is well-known in the school and whom they trust to support them.
- Students enjoy taking responsible roles such as acting as prefects or mentors for younger students. They told inspectors how they support and guide younger ones and encourage them to improve their behaviour.
- Support systems to ensure care and guidance and to promote good behaviour are outstanding. This provision for all students, including through the Achievement Centre, is thorough and very effective, but particularly for those for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable. Exclusion rates, although still above average, are decreasing year on year as a result of the excellent support offered to those whose conduct presents a challenge. Support for those using alternative provision is likewise exemplary and a model of good practice.
- The promotion of good attendance takes a high profile in displays around the school and attendance levels are improving; they are currently broadly average, as a result of well-focused support, particularly for those facing challenging circumstances. Students are punctual to lessons.
- Parents and carers, staff and students agree that behaviour is good and that the school keeps students safe.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and headteacher work in close partnership and have established an ethos and ambition that is shared by the whole school community. They are focused in their determination that all students should feel safe and confident and able to achieve their potential, despite many facing severe barriers to learning. They have established a strong team, and together they have

been rigorous in ensuring students' well-being and establishing an atmosphere in which students can learn and achieve.

- Leaders have been relentless in their drive to improve the quality of teaching and have taken robust action to eradicate inadequate teaching. Rigorous procedures for monitoring teaching are well established and a wide range of support provided for any identified weakness. This includes training, mentoring and coaching in small groups where good practice can be shared, together with the high expectations of all senior staff. Newly qualified teachers are well-supported. This has resulted in a rapid improvement in teaching quality.
- Subject leaders are effective in promoting high quality teaching, being held to account for the progress in their subject, and are well-supported by senior leaders to promote their professional development.
- The school knows itself well and has correctly identified key areas for development. The tracking and analysis of students' progress is exemplary, so that leaders can quickly identify and address underachievement, ensure equal opportunity for all and that there is no discrimination.
- The courses that students follow are constantly being reviewed to ensure that they meet their needs well and promote their good achievement. The nurture group and Team 6/7 enable those identified as having weak literacy and numeracy skills to be taught by specialist teachers ensuring that they settle well and meet the school's high expectations for behaviour and attitudes to learning. This, together with opportunities for all to develop self-confidence and creativity through the performing arts, is now ensuring a strong start in Key Stage 3, to address students' low level of skill on entry. A variety of courses at Key Stage 4, including in engineering, opportunities to follow the English Baccalaureate and the provision of vocational and alternative courses, meet the needs of all students.
- Careers advice and special days devoted to personal, social and health education promote students' well-being. In 2013 no students left the school who were not in education, employment or training. (NEETS)
- A wide range of enrichment experiences contribute very well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including school trips, sport, dance and music, community celebrations of religious festivals, together with the outstanding facilities and light, airy inspirational learning environment,.
- The local authority supports the school well and uses many aspects of the school's work as a beacon of good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors know the school very well and use their expertise highly effectively in providing robust challenge and support for the school's leaders. They are knowledgeable about the school's performance and are able to compare it with schools nationally. Governors take an active part in the school through partnerships with a variety of subjects, enhancing their understanding of teaching and learning. They ensure pay increases are linked to performance, and support senior leaders in their drive to raise the quality of teaching and in tackling the causes of underachievement. The governing body is fully aware of the spending of pupil premium funding and checks its impact on raising the achievement of the students it supports. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary.

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	133708
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	427141

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	830
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Boulter
Principal	Gill Eatough
Date of previous school inspection	05 October 2010
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