

Waseley Hills High School

School Road, Rubery, Birmingham, B45 9EL

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards are steadily rising and rates of progress are increasing, particularly in science and humanities. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades is increasing in most subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the high-quality care and support they receive.
- Students value the good teaching they receive and teachers' willingness to provide extra support. Teachers' good subject knowledge inspires students' interest.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to adults and support each other well. They take particular care of the students from the specialist resource bases who are included in their lessons.
- The school's efforts to keep students safe are outstanding. Students say that bullying is very rare and that there is always someone they can go to for support. They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The sixth form is good. Students show strong commitment to their studies as a result of the consistently good teaching they receive. They make a significant contribution to school life by supporting younger students and acting as good role models.
- Religion, philosophy and ethics provision is a strength of the school and promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values well.
- The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, has systematically addressed the issues raised by the previous inspection. He has taken robust action to build the capacity of subject leaders to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Senior leaders provide good support for the headteacher in establishing high expectations of all staff. This has led to an improved quality of teaching, rising achievement and improved behaviour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The marking of students' work does not always provide sufficient information on how they can improve their work. Teachers do not always check that students are acting on the advice they receive.
- The promotion of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Leaders' analysis of the progress made by different groups of students is not sharp enough. As a result, leaders are not able to hold teachers fully to account for ensuring that all students are making the maximum progress of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning in lessons across all year groups and subjects. Six of the lessons were seen with one of the school’s senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body and staff.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at policies, the school’s own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, and its plans for development. They also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of lesson observations, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students’ work, including their mathematics books.
- The views of the 45 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the school’s own survey of parents’ views, together with correspondence from parents. The 47 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rachel Laverack	Additional Inspector
Mark Feldman	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. Less than one in ten students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average, at about one in five.
- The school has specially resourced provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The local authority provides resourced provision for seven students with hearing impairment who are fully included in mainstream classes across the school. The school provides a Mainstream Autistic Base (MAB) for 11 students from Years 7 to 10.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average at one in five.
- Full-time off-site alternative courses are currently provided for five students in Years 9 and 11 at the MET (Medical Education Team) provided by the Worcestershire local authority, the James Brindley Hospital School, Bourneville College and the Forge.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- New leaders of English, mathematics and science and of the sixth form were appointed in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that students make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently provide students with clear advice on how to improve their work in order to achieve their targets and check that students follow this advice
 - teachers promote literacy and numeracy skills more systematically across all subjects.
- Improve leaders' analysis of performance data so that they more easily identify the progress rates of different groups of students across the school and hold subject leaders and teachers to account.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by the senior team and by the governing body, has systematically addressed the issues raised by the previous inspection so that all aspects of the school's work have shown improvement. He has been robust in his actions to strengthen leadership of the core subjects and build the capacity of these subject leaders to drive improvement.
- The new leaders of English, mathematics and science have been able to galvanise staff enthusiasm through their leadership of these subjects, ensuring greater consistency of practice, for example in lesson planning. This has shown a positive impact on raising achievement and the quality of teaching in these subjects, particularly in science.
- Leaders ensure that all are valued and that diversity is recognised and celebrated. The very effective pastoral system helps to ensure that students can talk to adults, feel safe and be themselves. The vertical tutor system that groups Years 8 to 10 and Years 11 to 13 together, enables students of different ages to support each other, with older students acting as good role models. To ease the transition to secondary school, students in Year 7 are tutored separately until they have fully settled into the school. Leaders ensure the equal opportunities of students in the specially resourced provisions, and make certain that these students are fully included in school life.
- Leaders check carefully on the impact of the pupil premium on the progress and well-being of disadvantaged students. They have identified that the support provided for these students in 2014 was not having sufficient impact on their achievement and involvement in school. Students did not respond well to being supported by teachers who did not know them. The support now provided by the school's own subject specialists is proving to be far more successful in dramatically reducing the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and other students in the school. The school provides excellent care and support for these students, and for their families, and seeks to raise aspirations.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' interests and abilities. All have the opportunity to take E-Bacc subjects. A range of off-site courses is provided for students at risk of exclusion or who require specialist medical support. The attendance and well-being of students following these courses are closely monitored. Special curriculum days are enjoyed by students. These include 'democracy' days, where British values are well promoted. Religion, philosophy and ethics lessons (RSE) are a key strength of the school's provision, promoting tolerance and respect, and ensuring students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Through the provision of a 'learn to learn' course, which promotes students' basic skills, leaders ensure that students are quick to build good learning habits when they join the school.
- Independent careers advice is provided, ensuring that all are able to identify their goals and are supported through their option choices. Students appreciate this advice and say that it has resulted in them choosing courses that meet their needs and interests well.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements. Students facing challenging circumstances are very well supported. Leadership of the Mainstream Autistic Base (MAB) is good.
- The school constantly seeks to strengthen its partnership with parents, who are kept fully informed. The parents' forum is well attended and provides parents with the opportunity to share their views with the school. Parents' meetings are also well attended, as are the opportunities for social activities.
- Leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Students who fail to meet their targets are quickly identified through rigorous tracking and monitoring, and are well supported. However, the analysis of performance information is not focused enough on the rates of progress made by different groups of students across the school. As a result, it is difficult for senior staff or subject leaders to check that teachers are ensuring that all groups are making the maximum rates of progress.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors give a strong lead in the direction of the school and provide a good balance of challenge and support. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and have ensured that the expertise of new governors is fully utilised in improving the ability to monitor the quality of all aspects of the school's work. Governors work well as a cohesive team.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of performance data and how the school compares to others nationally. They ensure that they have regular training to enable them to carry out their role effectively. Governors have been particularly vigilant to ensure that additional funding such as the pupil premium is used effectively and they robustly monitor its impact. They have challenged the school's leaders to improve the use of funding in order to have greater impact. Governors promote links with parents well, and ensure that students and staff are kept safe.
- Governors have a strong role in monitoring and supporting teaching and learning. They ensure that teachers' pay rises are linked to the achievement of their students and the whole-school targets set for teachers. Governors fully support leaders in their constant drive for improvement in all aspects of the school's work. For example, they interviewed the special needs coordinator to ensure that they had a good understanding of the issues faced by disabled students and those with special educational needs, including in the specialist resource provision.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students enjoy their learning, are keen to do well and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. Students say that their learning is rarely disrupted, apart from occasional chatter.
- Students present themselves well and are polite, courteous and well mannered. They are helpful and friendly to visitors. They show respect for adults and get on well with each other. There is no graffiti or litter, and the inspirational art displays are popular and treated with respect.
- Attendance rates in the main school and the sixth form have risen and are now above average, and punctuality across the school is good.
- Exclusion rates have fallen dramatically over the past year as a result of the policy of internal exclusion to ensure that students are kept in school as far as possible to continue their education. Effective support is provided to enable students with behavioural difficulties to improve.
- Students value the opportunities provided to take responsible roles, such as through the school council, where they are able to influence the school's leaders; for example, in improving the reward system and the school café facilities.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those facing challenging circumstances are very well supported, including through the well-coordinated support from external agencies. The friendly and caring atmosphere in the MAB provides a safe haven where students can socialise with each other and staff at break in a relaxed and supportive environment. This facility was buzzing with activity during the inspection.
- Students across the school say that they feel very safe and that bullying is rare. There is always someone who will support them if they need help. Derogatory language, including any racist or homophobic language, is not tolerated.
- Students have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including what to do should they encounter cyber-bullying. They value the opportunities provided to discuss such issues – for example, in their RPE lessons or tutor periods – or to seek advice from the school nurse on, for example, how to stop smoking.
- The safety, well-being and attendance of those students on alternative provision is very carefully

monitored and frequently reviewed.

- Adults lead by example in the care they show for students, so relationships are warm and supportive. One student said, 'We care even more for the students in the resource bases when they join our classes.'
- Most parents and staff agree that the school keeps their children safe and that students behave well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders rigorously monitor all aspects of teaching throughout the year. The results show that teaching is now good in the main school and in the sixth form. This was confirmed by observations of students' learning during the inspection, looking at their books, talking to students and examining records of their progress.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge often inspires students to want to learn more, and teachers' expert understanding of examination requirements gives their students confidence in how to succeed. Many teachers provide clear success criteria or information about how students will be assessed. This enables students to check for themselves how well they are doing and identify targets for improvement.
- Where students make the fastest progress, teachers show high expectations and set tasks that build on previous learning and are closely matched to the different abilities within the class. For example, in French, students were observed gradually building their knowledge and understanding of how to use the past tense. They were able to identify what they already knew and then to build on this knowledge and apply it to different verbs, recording all new grammar clearly and systematically to enable them to refer to this resource when revising.
- Additional adults are used well in lessons, particularly to ensure that disabled students and those who have special educational needs are fully included and are able to achieve the work set for them. Support staff are fully aware of teachers' planning and take an active role in lessons, often working as a strong team with the teacher.
- Although many teachers provide opportunities to read out loud, not all focus enough on extending students' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, incorrect spellings may be picked up though marking, but grammar and the quality of writing receive less attention across different subjects.
- Most teachers provide work at the right level of difficulty. They use questioning skilfully to stretch the most-able students and they make sure that the least able are well supported. However, a small minority of staff do not have the expectation that all students will make good progress. For example, some teachers do not set new, more challenging targets once students achieve those that are set for them.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Teachers do not always provide clear or detailed information about how students can improve their work or check that the advice they have given has been followed. Where students are required to identify for themselves what needs to be improved, teachers do not always check to see if what students have written is appropriate.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students start at the school with skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics that are typically average, although the 2014 Year 11 cohort entered with above-average skills. Since the previous inspection, levels of attainment have steadily risen and, in 2014, the proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was higher than the previous year, although remained broadly average. The school's tracking data indicate that students are well on track to secure a further significant rise in 2015. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades (A* and A) also rose in 2014 in nearly all subjects.
- The proportion of students making nationally expected progress in English and mathematics is also rising. However, the overall progress data for these subjects in 2014 were depressed as a result of a proportion

of students in that year group facing very challenging circumstances. Some of these were therefore educated off-site, many having medical needs that resulted in them being unable to take the full range of subjects or to meet their targets. The school's current progress tracking and assessments indicate that the rate of pupils' progress is rising and is continuing to do so this year as a result of improved teaching and leadership in English and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the rates of progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds or the very few who speak English as an additional language, although leaders do not systematically check the progress of these groups.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make equally good progress as a result of the good teaching and support they receive. Students in the specially resourced provision for those with hearing impairment make expected progress, all accessing the main curriculum in addition to provision of special support. They are able to lip read and communicate well as a result of the variety of support that is tailored to meet their individual learning needs.
- Students in the MAB are very well supported and, as a result, make better progress than students nationally and others in the school. They are integrated into mainstream classes wherever possible, and supported very well by expert teaching assistants who are able to judge quickly when students need to go back to the base or follow individually planned time-tables.
- No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The most-able students are well supported by the school to ensure that they make good progress. Most of their teachers have these students identified in their planning and set challenging targets, giving them opportunities to explore their interests and talents. The school provides frequent opportunities to raise aspiration through, for example, university trips. Pupil premium funding is used to ensure that the most-able disadvantaged students are able to attend Easter school revision sessions.
- In 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and other students in the school and those nationally was too wide, although this performance data is also affected by the proportion of students facing challenging circumstances who were receiving their education during Year 11 off-site. In English, disadvantaged students in Year 11 were nearly a GCSE grade behind others in the academy and other students nationally. In mathematics, they were one and a half grades behind others in the academy and students nationally. There were similar significant gaps in rates of progress. The school's rigorous assessment data indicate that this situation is likely to improve significantly for disadvantaged students in the current Year 11 as the result of the improved support they are now receiving.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used effectively to support, for as long as required, any students who start school with below-average skills in literacy and numeracy. Sixth form students support younger students well in their reading. The recently introduced reading support scheme in Year 7 is yet to show significant impact. Students higher up the school show an enjoyment in reading.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form, making good progress in academic and work-based courses.

The sixth form provision

is good

- All groups of students make good progress in the sixth form. Students are keen to stay on at school after their GCSE courses. The proportion staying on to complete their courses in Year 13 is above average.
- Over the past two years, standards have remained at, or close to, national averages despite some entering the sixth form with below average GCSE results, including in English and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the performance of different groups of students, including disabled students, those who have special educational needs or the disadvantaged. All students are expected to re-sit their GCSE English and mathematics examinations until they achieve at least a grade C.
- Leaders' monitoring and records of students' achievement over time show that the quality of teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Students speak very positively about the feedback they receive on their work. Students show strong engagement in their learning, showing enthusiasm to research the

topics they are studying and contribute their ideas. They appreciate their teachers' good subject knowledge and the passion they show for their subjects. Teachers provide appropriate challenge for the most-able students.

- Students say the sixth form promotes very good personal as well as academic development, built on strong relationships between teachers, students and parents. Students are provided with a good range of enrichment activities and opportunities for team building and to develop leadership roles, including through the school council and supporting younger students. They value the mixed-age tutor groups, which enables them to support Year 11 students and act as good role models.
- Good leadership of the sixth form ensures that students are well supported and guided, and that any underachievement is quickly addressed. High-quality advice and information is provided to support university application. As a result, a high proportion of students go on to higher education and the proportion not in education, employment or training is very low.
- A key strength of the sixth form is the way that their private study sessions are organised. Supervised sessions, where students follow directed tasks set by their subject teachers, have resulted in improved progress and strong attitudes to study.
- The sixth form fully meets the current standards for 16 to 19 study programmes. As work-based courses are provided nearby, most courses offered are academic. There is a strong focus on improving employability skills, and all students have the opportunity for work experience.

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	138664
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	442587

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	804
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Hogg
Headteacher	Alan Roll
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2013
Telephone number	0121 453 5211
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