

# Ounsdale High School

Ounsdale Road, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV5 8BJ

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in a number of curriculum areas, including mathematics and humanities.
- Disadvantaged pupils do less well than other pupils in the school and nationally. Progress towards diminishing the differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is too slow.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the weaknesses of the school but their actions have not had enough impact on improving outcomes for all pupils.
- In some lessons pupils' learning slows because they spend time on undemanding activities.
- Teachers do not consistently set hard enough work for pupils, particularly those with middle or low prior attainment. As a result, these pupils make less progress than their more-able peers.
- A new assessment system is in place across the trust but it is not yet fully understood by staff, pupils and parents. As a result, it is not effective enough in setting challenging targets, accurately tracking progress and identifying underachievement.
- The sixth form requires improvement. There is too much variation in the progress made by students in different subject areas and too few students achieve the highest grades.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Attendance has improved in recent years and is now in line with national levels.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils behave sensibly and maturely in lessons and around the school site at break and lunchtime.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons and make the progress they are capable of.
- There has been significant improvement in English GCSE results in the last two years, with pupils now making consistently good progress because of effective teaching.
- Leaders have been successful in developing a new curriculum model that ensures that pupils study a wider, more demanding range of subjects.

## Full report

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

- Leaders should ensure that all pupils make good progress, particularly those with low and middle prior attainment and disadvantaged pupils, by:
  - providing additional support to departments, such as mathematics and humanities, where outcomes are weaker
  - providing training for teachers on how they can better support disadvantaged pupils in the classroom
  - improving teachers' understanding of new assessment systems so that targets and expectations are more challenging and there is greater clarity about whether pupils are making enough progress to reach their new targets
  - encouraging pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning and show greater engagement and resilience.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that teachers:
  - have high expectations of all pupils in their lessons, and demand that pupils quickly complete the work set
  - are clear about what they want pupils to learn in the lesson and set tasks that are suitably challenging
  - use a range of strategies to check that pupils understand their work, and encourage them to develop deeper and more complex responses.
- Improve outcomes for students in the sixth form by:
  - helping teachers identify teaching strategies that will support their most-able students to achieve the highest grades
  - supporting greater consistency across subjects, sharing the practice of the best departments and acting quickly to support departments where underperformance is evident.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Many senior and middle leaders are new to their roles. They are hardworking and enthusiastic but have not applied enough urgency to their improvement actions. This is particularly noticeable in the work around supporting disadvantaged pupils and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- There is too much variation in the performance of different departments. English has rapidly improved and pupils' outcomes reflect the higher standards of teaching. In mathematics, improvement is much slower, despite intervention and external support from the trust.
- Teachers receive training to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the staff survey indicates they value this. However, it has not had enough impact on the outcomes for pupils, particularly low and middle prior attainers and disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders recognise that improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is a key priority for the school and have produced a very honest impact statement on the school website. A pupil premium champion has been identified and disadvantaged pupils benefit from a number of activities to raise their aspirations, including trips to top universities and opportunities to perform in public theatres. However, the impact on pupils' outcomes has been too slow and there is little evidence that teachers have adapted their practice to ensure better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in their ordinary day-to-day learning.
- The school's SEN department is not responsible for monitoring the progress of some pupils who have social, emotional or mental health issues. Although the support provided for these pupils through the pastoral team is appropriate, they lack the systematic support, tracking and contact with parents and carers that are an expectation within the SEN department. Leaders recognise that this could create differences in support and are taking steps to address the issue.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is a methodical approach to quality assurance activity, making good use of external sources of support. School improvement priorities are appropriately drawn from the quality assurance findings.
- The curriculum has been carefully developed in recent years to ensure that pupils have access to a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. More pupils are now encouraged to study languages. There are plenty of opportunities to attend clubs and sporting activities at lunchtime or after school.
- There is good leadership of SEN. There has been considerable investment in staffing, building up a strong team of knowledgeable staff. The team links well with departments in the school and provides good classroom support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on ensuring that the school addresses pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Working closely with the trust, pupils have

opportunities to compete and perform at high levels. There are regular opportunities to travel abroad, and there is extensive fundraising work with a number of charities. Themes of respect, tolerance and keeping safe are evident in many corridor displays and repeated in assemblies and through form-time. Leaders are aware the weakest element of this work is in ensuring that pupils have knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths, and they are developing their 'choices for life' programme to include this.

- Leaders and staff recognise the positive impact that membership of the Invictus Academy Trust has brought to the school. In many subject areas, teachers now work closely with colleagues from other schools in the trust to develop common resources and assessment materials. A trust-wide assessment system has recently been introduced to support greater consistency in target setting and pupil tracking. There are some initial difficulties in reaching a common understanding of the new standards but further training is planned.
- The trust appoints subject directors in key areas such as mathematics, English and science to work across schools and ensure that best practice is shared. The positive impact of a director of sixth form is evident in the work to eradicate underperforming post-16 subjects. Trust support for mathematics has had some impact in improving the quality of teaching and learning but is yet to have an impact on GCSE outcomes.
- Trust procedures to quality assure the work of all the schools in the trust are now well established and very helpful in identifying improvement priorities. However, the trust has yet to ensure the rapid implementation of actions where there are concerns.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are longstanding and very loyal to the school. They welcome the improvements made in recent years and value the increase in accountability that has been brought through membership of the Invictus Academy Trust. They receive regular data updates from senior leaders. They conscientiously carry out their safeguarding duties, visiting school regularly and participating in interview panels. They monitor the spending on disadvantaged pupils and know that the actions taken have not yet had the necessary impact on improving outcomes for these pupils. They have recently introduced a new 'link governor' model, where individual governors take an increased responsibility for an area of the work of the school. They have found this very helpful in increasing their understanding and empowering them to challenge the decisions of senior leaders.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school conscientiously carries out all its safeguarding responsibilities. Records are carefully kept and the school has good contacts with external agencies that provide additional support to its most vulnerable pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers are not clear enough about what skills and knowledge they expect pupils to develop during lessons. As a result, learning activities do not sharply meet the needs of the pupils, often lacking challenge, particularly for pupils who had lower attainment in key stage 2 tests. Pupils told inspectors that in some lessons work is boring and dull and can be too easy. Some Year 7 pupils felt they were repeating work from primary school.
- There is some confusion among staff, pupils and parents about the new assessment procedures. Some pupils are not sure what the new levels mean and what they need to do to meet their targets.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of how much work pupils can complete during a lesson. Pupils are given too much time to complete some tasks, so the pace of learning is slow.
- Teachers do not carefully question pupils to check that they understand their learning and too quickly accept brief or undemanding answers. Questioning does not stretch pupils to think more widely or deeply about their curriculum.
- Many teachers thoughtfully include harder 'challenge' questions or activities in their lesson planning but evidence from books and lessons suggests pupils rarely attempt these.
- Teachers are generally aware of disadvantaged pupils in their classes and indicate them on lesson plans. However, there was no evidence of different teaching strategies in place to provide additional support and encouragement for these pupils.
- Teaching in the English department supports pupils to make good progress. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' starting points. They plan lessons and develop resources that allow pupils to develop their writing skills. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their lessons in English and value the help that teachers give them.
- Pupils value the structured feedback they receive from many of their teachers and the time they are given in lessons to try to improve their own work. This is more evident in key stage 4 lessons.
- When provided with interesting and challenging activities, pupils engage well and show real enthusiasm for their learning. For example, a Year 10 English group gave presentations to each other as mimes, taking imaginative risks in a trusted environment.
- Pupils particularly enjoy lessons where they have opportunities to discuss their work and participate in practical activities. They gave examples of art and food technology as subjects that they particularly enjoy.
- Teaching assistants are effective in providing classroom support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They have good subject knowledge and encourage pupils to work independently rather than rely on them for answers. Pupils are confident that this support helps them to learn.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Important issues like bullying and safe and sensible use of social media are introduced through the school's 'choices for life' programme. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any concern.
- Punctuality is good. There are daily checks and parents are notified if their child is late to school. Despite the size of the site and the long walk between some classrooms, pupils are punctual to lessons.
- The school supports pupils' understanding of British values effectively. Assemblies, the pastoral programme and displays around the school reinforce values of tolerance and respect. Staff and pupils have undergone training on the 'Prevent' duty, the government's programme to address concerns around radicalisation and extremism.
- Attendance for most pupils has improved considerably in the last two years and is currently in line with national levels. However, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities do not attend as regularly. The school has introduced additional support to encourage better attendance, and attendance for these groups is slowly improving.
- Although pupils are usually quiet and sensible in lessons, they are not consistently actively engaged in their learning. They sometimes need additional encouragement from their teachers to work quickly through the tasks set. Leaders recognise this and are keen to help pupils become more resilient about their work, never settling for less than their best.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are calm, helpful and move sensibly through narrow corridors. They are polite and respectful towards each other.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons, following instructions and listening carefully. Teachers deal effectively with incidents of low-level disruption and skilfully keep pupils on track.
- Pupils recognise that behaviour in most lessons is good and they understand the school's sanctions and rewards system.
- Behaviour logs are very detailed, are analysed carefully and lead to action. The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions is reducing, although fixed-term exclusions have been higher for disadvantaged pupils than for other pupils.
- When pupils are given too much time to complete tasks, or the tasks are too easy, they chat with their friends rather than focus on their work.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017 examinations, pupils at the school made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally. In 2016, pupils made poor progress in almost all curriculum areas. In 2017, there was some improvement in English, science and languages but progress in mathematics and humanities was still significantly below national averages.
- Disadvantaged pupils make less progress than their peers in the school and other disadvantaged pupils nationally. There was a small improvement between 2016 and 2017, and the school's tracking information indicates a further small improvement in 2018. Leaders recognise that improvement in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is not rapid enough.
- Pupils who arrive at the school with high prior attainment make progress that is broadly in line with national averages, but pupils with middle and low prior attainment do not do as well. Current school tracking information at key stage 4 and work in pupils' books still reflect this pattern. Teachers' expectations of these pupils are too low and they are not consistently setting work that is challenging enough.
- Only 16% of the 2017 cohort were entered for the English Baccalaureate. This is much lower than national levels. Leaders recognise that they need to ensure that more pupils have access to the balance of English, mathematics, science, humanities and a language that the English baccalaureate represents. A much larger proportion of current pupils are now sitting this facilitating range of GCSEs.
- By the end of Year 11, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with those found nationally. In 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or better in English and mathematics was similar to the national standard. The school's tracking information indicates that current Year 11 pupils are achieving similar standards this year.
- Leaders believe that pupils are now making better progress in almost all their subjects. While inspectors agree that there is some evidence of improvement, the work seen in lessons and books would indicate that there are still areas where pupils are not making enough progress, in particular in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities show improving achievement because of the effective support in lessons that is closely aligned to their specific learning needs.
- There is an effective programme in key stage 3 of additional help in literacy and numeracy for pupils who arrive below expected standards. Pupils told inspectors that they value these additional lessons and that they help them feel more confident in their other classes.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Progression rates to further education or training are higher than national levels and pupils agree that they are very well supported in making decisions about their future.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- There was some improvement in the progress students made in the sixth form between 2016 and 2017, but there is still too much variation between subjects. The school's tracking of current students suggests that there are still considerable

differences between subjects in the progress students are making.

- Students on vocational courses generally make better progress than those on academic courses.
- Students who enter the sixth form with high GCSE results make less progress than other students, achieving on average half a grade below the national average.
- Leaders in the sixth form carefully track the progress of sixth-form students and take steps to intervene where there is high risk of underachievement. The impact of this work is limited, and more urgent carefully targeted action is necessary.
- The small number of students who resit English or mathematics GCSEs do well and make good progress.
- Leaders of the sixth form have high expectations of students. There is good collaboration happening across the trust to ensure that students have access to a broad range of high-quality courses despite low sixth-form numbers.
- Leaders carefully consider how successful departments have been in the past when deciding what sixth-form courses can run. They have removed courses where students have not been successful and sought alternative provision elsewhere in the trust to meet students' needs.
- Students in the sixth form receive good pastoral support. They attend regularly. They feel safe and are taught about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They receive good impartial careers guidance and successfully move on to higher education and training.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across subjects. When teaching is good, it is well planned and built on a secure understanding of students' starting points. Students undertake ambitious activities that enable them to work independently, build their research skills and think hard about their learning.
- Where teaching is less effective, there is a lack of challenge and limited opportunities for students to think deeply or discuss their work.

## School details

Unique reference number	141343
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10042843

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	870
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	75
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Geoff Marsh
Principal	Christine Brown
Telephone number	01902 504930
Website	<a href="http://www.ounsdaleschool.co.uk/">www.ounsdaleschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@ounsdaleschool.co.uk">office@ounsdaleschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in March 2015 as a founder member of the Invictus Academy Trust. The trust currently runs five schools in the West Midlands.
- The academy has its own local governing body that oversees its day-to-day work. There is also a trust board that employs a chief executive officer, and a small central team that oversees all schools in the trust.
- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- Pupils enter the school with levels of prior attainment that are broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil

premium is below average.

- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students receiving SEN support is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in secondary schools.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all curriculum areas and undertook a number of learning walks, in most cases jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. She also met with the chief executive officer of the Invictus Academy Trust.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and considered information about pupils' current and recent academic performance.
- Inspectors observed tutor time and pupils' behaviour at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors took into account the 120 views of parents on the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered 26 responses to the questionnaire for staff and 63 responses to the questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally around the school and in discussion groups.
- Inspectors reviewed information on the school's website.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to SEN, behaviour and safeguarding, and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.

## Inspection team

Deborah James, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Holmes	Ofsted 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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