

Waseley Hills High School and Sixth Form Centre

School Road, Rubery, Birmingham, B45 9EL

Inspection dates

30–31 January 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

- Teaching varies in quality. As a result, students' achievement varies between subjects, and requires improvement overall.
- Teaching in English, mathematics and science is not enabling students to progress at a rapid enough pace.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to develop competent writing skills.
- Teachers do not all use information about students' progress well enough to plan activities at the right level.
- Teachers' management of students' behaviour varies. In weaker lessons, students lose interest and their behaviour lapses.
- Senior leaders' actions to improve teaching have not made enough impact. Some leaders and managers do not give teachers enough advice on how they can improve.
- Leaders and governors do not have a clear view of the impact of their spending on students who are supported by additional funding.

The school has the following strengths

- There are examples of outstanding teaching, for instance, in humanities subjects. Students make outstanding progress in religious education.
- Care and support for disabled students and those with special educational needs are good. These students make good progress and achieve well.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress in several A-level subjects because teaching in the sixth form is strong.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons. Twenty of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders, other staff, and groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own parent surveys and the 29 responses from the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors analysed examination results and scrutinised a range of other evidence including the school self-evaluation and improvement plans, records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance, lesson monitoring information, safeguarding documentation and examples of students' work.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David King

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

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Alicia Welsh-Kuligowicz

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school, with specialist status for business and enterprise.
- The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium, (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for those from Forces families and for students known to be eligible for free school meals), is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion of students at school action plus or who are assessed with a statement of educational needs is above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for eight students with autism spectrum disorders.
- The school hosts the local authority's provision for six deaf students.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Waseley Hills High School converted to become an academy school in September 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The alternative provision used by the school is the 'New chances' programme run by Worcestershire local authority, a Key Stage 4 hairdressing course at New College, and a local authority programme at The Forge in Redditch.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good, by:
 - using information about students' progress better to make sure work is hard enough for all the different abilities within the class
 - ensuring that students are given sufficient opportunity and help to develop competent writing skills
 - ensuring that all teachers apply the school's behaviour management policy so that off-task behaviour in lessons is eliminated.
- Raise achievement in English, mathematics and science, to match that in humanities by:
 - sharing the existing good practice in humanities subjects to establish much better teaching in the core subjects
 - raising teachers' expectations about what students can achieve, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that new systems for checking students' progress and the quality of teaching are consistently applied by all leaders and managers, focusing on students' learning and progress
 - make sure that teachers receive clear feedback on what they need to do to improve further so that all students make good progress in all subjects
 - ensuring that improvement plans make improving teaching the highest priority and are sharply focussed with specific and measurable targets so that progress can be checked more easily

- developing a whole-school approach so that all teachers support students' literacy development, particularly in extended writing
 - accelerating the rate of improvement by working more with experts from other schools.
 - making sure leaders and governors measure the impact of the spending of additional funding to ensure accelerated progress for students supported by the pupil premium.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics when they join the school are broadly average. The proportion of students in Year 11 achieving five A*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is usually broadly average.
- Achievement requires improvement because not enough students make good progress overall, and their achievement is too variable across subjects. In 2012, students did not do as well in English, art and languages as they did in mathematics, business and religious studies. Most groups of students make very slow progress in science. However, students do particularly well in religious education, attaining more of the top grades than average.
- Overall, middle-ability students perform less well than others. This is because teachers do not set challenging-enough work for these students.
- Some more-able students do not attain the higher grades that they should. The school enters Year 11 students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics in November and English in January. The number of A*-A grades students achieve in these subjects is below the national average.
- Students who study for some of their time with alternative providers make appropriate progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs supported on school action plus, including those based in the resourced provision, make progress which is significantly better than that expected nationally. Students with statements of special educational needs and those supported on school action make good progress.
- The school uses the additional pupil premium funding to provide students with one-to-one support, additional teaching assistants, textbooks, school uniforms and laptops. These students make similar progress to those of other students in the school.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students join the sixth form with average starting points. Students achieve above-average results in religious education, sociology and psychology. The rise in students' average points scores indicates the sixth form is improving strongly. Students' progress on BTEC courses is also good, reflecting well on the school's specialism.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching so that overall, it is not having a good impact on learning. Students say that in some lessons, 'teachers are inspiring; in others, it's copying off the board'.
- Not all teachers use the information available to them about students' prior learning to pitch lessons at the right level. As a result, students sometimes find tasks too easy. In these lessons, they finish work quickly and have nothing to do. Some teachers do not provide sufficient support for students to develop as competent writers.
- Although achievement in mathematics is improving, inspectors observed some students making limited progress because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what they can

achieve.

- Inspectors observed a number of lessons where expectations of behaviour were not high enough. Students become disengaged and are allowed to drift off task.
- In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and plan activities with high levels of challenge which build on what students have already learned. For example, an imaginative range of activities targeted to meet students' individual needs enabled students in a Year 12 psychology lesson to make outstanding progress when working together to describe research into stress and daily hassles. Teaching in psychology is typically well-planned and supported by high-quality resources which ensure that students make good progress. Across the school there are examples of outstanding teaching, including in the sixth form, and particularly in humanities subjects.
- The quality of teachers' written marking is good and sometimes exemplary. For example, in a Year 10 German lesson students received extensive feedback on what they needed to do to take the next steps in their learning.
- Most disabled students and those with special educational needs are taught in mainstream classes. These students benefit from teaching which is good. Teachers use a variety of high-quality resources which get students actively engaged. Teachers use their good knowledge of students to group them effectively, target questions or decide who needs additional support. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson on the features of descriptive writing, students made good progress as a result of the teacher's high expectations and the good support they received from teaching assistants. This is not the case in other lessons, where students are not given enough opportunities to use and develop literacy skills. The six students with autism spectrum disorder access good support from the resource base to support their social skills, when appropriate.
- Senior leaders' focus is now on improving the quality of teaching through a coaching programme. Staff are starting to share good ideas about approaches that work best but these initiatives are too recent to have had their full impact on students' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- In a minority of lessons, particularly in middle-ability sets, students do not immediately do what is asked of them and there is some off-task chatter. This is generally a result of weaker teaching where teachers need more support to develop their classroom management skills. In these lessons, teachers do not apply the school's behaviour management systems consistently well.
 - Most parents believe that students' behaviour is good and inspectors judge that students' attitudes to learning are positive in most lessons. However, the low-level disruption that occurs in some means that overall, behaviour requires improvement despite students' general courtesy to each other and to visitors.
 - Students say they feel safe and bullying is not a feature of the school. Any instances which do occur are dealt with effectively. There is no discrimination and all students feel cared for. Students are sensible when moving between lessons. Staff and prefects supervise students well at break and lunch-times.
 - Attendance is broadly average. Fixed term exclusions are almost twice the national average but
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are reducing.

- Students say the school's new rewards system is very motivating. Students make use of house and school councils to ensure that the school listens to their views.
- The quality of care provided for disabled students and those with special educational needs is good. Both students' achievement and social skills are well-supported.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither achievement nor teaching is good.
 - Despite the weaknesses that exist, leaders and managers are determined to raise standards. The leadership team has the full support of virtually all members of staff. However, self-evaluation is not concise enough, leading in turn to improvement plans which are too general. Too many actions identified are not directly linked to improving teaching.
 - Senior leaders' evaluations of lessons are not always focussed on students' progress. Some senior leaders need more support so they can provide teachers with helpful feedback that identifies exactly what needs to be done to improve learning.
 - Over the past term, arrangements for monitoring teaching have improved although this is too recent to have had an impact on whether teachers' pay rises are closely linked to students' achievement.
 - Subject leaders' focus on improving the quality of marking has been effective: inspectors observed good quality marking across the school. Other middle leaders, known as Heads of House, are committed to securing students' good behaviour but do not focus enough on monitoring students' academic performance. New systems for monitoring lessons and tracking students' attainment are not consistently applied by all leaders.
 - As an academy, the school is no longer obliged to work with the local authority. The use of external support to validate the school's judgements is limited. Training for staff has recently concentrated on improving teachers' tool-kit of teaching strategies. The coaching programme, in particular, has helped teachers to gain new skills but training does not always focus on whole-school needs.
 - Leadership of the sixth form has ensured students' good achievement by offering students high-quality advice about their futures; this guides their learning and progress. Leadership of special educational needs is good. Deaf students and those with autism spectrum disorders who are supported by the resource base make good progress in lessons.
 - The curriculum is a good mix of academic and vocational learning. Themed days throughout the year enhance students' learning. For example, Year 8 students visit a Hindu temple on worship day. Individual departments develop their own policies towards the teaching of literacy and numeracy. More-able linguists are now able to study two languages at GCSE level.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported through outstanding achievement in religious education, working with the community, the school's programme of
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assemblies, and additional events. For example, a talk for Year 9 students, studying Anne Frank's diary, with a survivor of the Holocaust, was organised during the school's Holocaust awareness week, promoting a range of moral and cultural understanding.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Following a period of disagreements within the governing body over the school's direction, governance is improving rapidly. The governing body understands the school's strengths and weaknesses but recognises that it is not sufficiently up-to-speed with how the quality of teaching is monitored and evaluated and the use of assessment. A training programme, delivered by senior leaders, has been organised for the near future. The governing body is not aware of how the school uses additional funding to support pupil premium students and therefore cannot evaluate how effectively this is being used. Overall the school's finances are secure. All statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding, are met.
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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	409363

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
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	844
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Hogg
Headteacher	Alan Roll
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 453 5211
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