

Hazel Grove High School

Jacksons Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 5JX

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Strategic leadership in the school is not strong enough. Leaders' actions are not sufficiently coordinated, which means that they have limited impact.
- Senior leaders do not monitor and evaluate the impact of their actions in a systematic way. Procedures for checking the quality of what happens across the school are not thorough enough. Consequently, inconsistencies exist, for example in the quality of teaching.
- During their time in school, pupils generally make progress at a rate that is similar to that of others nationally. However, this is not the case in mathematics. Pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not make good progress in this subject.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly. Disadvantaged pupils are also more likely than their peers to be excluded from school. This has a negative impact on their progress and attainment.
- Too many pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not attend school regularly.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve. They do not provide them with the right level of challenge.
- Senior leaders and governors do not ensure that the curriculum enables all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, to make the best possible progress and fulfil their potential.

The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is well led. This means that students benefit from a high-quality post-16 experience.
- Pupils benefit from strong teaching in English. This enables them to make good progress in this subject.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who attend the school's resourced provision receive high-quality support and teaching which enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils behave well around the school.
- Staff feel well supported and valued by senior leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of strategic leadership across the school by ensuring that:
 - leaders work in a coordinated way, with clear lines of responsibility
 - senior leaders gather information in a systematic way to identify areas of concern and meticulously monitor and evaluate the impact of all actions that they take
 - senior leaders use thorough quality assurance procedures to monitor all areas of the school's work
 - the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, enabling them to make the best possible progress and fulfil their potential, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - all pupils make at least good progress across the school, especially in mathematics
 - the progress of disadvantaged pupils matches or exceeds that of other pupils nationally.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers have the highest expectations of what their pupils can achieve and provide them with the right level of challenge.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - urgently reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, who are regularly absent from school
 - reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils who are excluded from school.

An external review of the school's use of 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

- Strategic leadership across the school is not strong enough. Individual leaders and staff are taking action to make improvements in various areas of the school, but the way this is happening is too disjointed. Lines of responsibility are not always clear. This means that senior leaders are not gathering and using relevant information in a systematic way to identify areas of concern. Nor are they monitoring and evaluating the impact of their actions in a methodical way.
- Quality assurance systems are not sufficiently rigorous. Consequently, inconsistencies exist across the school, particularly in the quality of teaching. For example, although a whole-school marking policy exists, it is clear from looking at pupils' work that there is wide variation in the quality of feedback that they are receiving.
- A high priority for the headteacher is that pupils at Hazel Grove develop a 'thirst for learning'. He believes that this is more likely to happen if pupils enjoy their learning. This is the main reason why pupils are given a great deal of choice when selecting their GCSE subjects. The impact of this freedom of choice is that many pupils are studying a curriculum that may well close down opportunities in the future. For example, in the last four years, only a small number of pupils have chosen to take the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Pupils choose their key stage 4 options during Year 8, and in the current Year 9 only 6% of pupils are taking the EBacc. This may limit pupils' access to a range of university courses. Inspectors were concerned that this has a particular negative impact on the future life chances of disadvantaged pupils.
- Senior leaders have designed the curriculum so that, every other Wednesday during the final period of the school day, pupils take part in a programme known as 'The Edge'. Pupils choose from a range of activities designed to develop their social and employment skills. This programme enables key stage 3 pupils in particular to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities.
- As part of 'The Edge' programme, pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 are allowed, with parental permission, to undertake private study at home. Senior leaders' rationale for this is that it will encourage independent learning in preparation for the next phase of education. However, leaders' thinking on this is ambiguous, as the letter to parents on this matter states that they hope pupils 'will choose to advance their grades by staying in school'. Indeed it also states that the pupils who did well in their GCSEs last year were those who stayed in school. Currently, a high proportion of Years 9, 10 and 11 pupils are choosing not to stay in school during this period. Inspectors were not convinced that leaders have effectively evaluated the impact of this private study arrangement to ensure that it is meeting pupils' needs and enabling them to make the best possible progress.
- The school's own evaluation of how it has used the pupil premium funding illustrates that its actions have had limited impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders speak of the difficulty that they have had in getting 'buy-in' from some pupils to engage with the various strategies. There is also a lack of evidence to indicate that all leaders have a deep enough understanding of the possible negative effects of curriculum decisions on this group of pupils.

- Leaders have had more success with the way that they have used the Year 7 catch-up funding to support pupils who were behind in their literacy and/or numeracy. The majority of these pupils are now working at the expected standard in English and mathematics.
- SEN funding is used effectively to provide appropriate support for pupils, which enables most of them to make good progress. This is particularly the case for those pupils who attend the resourced provision within the school. Parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities speak very highly of the care that their children receive from the staff which, in the words of one parent, means that their child feels 'happy and secure'. However, the strategic leadership of this area is not sharp enough. It is not clear who has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of SEN provision.
- A large number of parents responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 98% of whom would recommend this school to others. Many took the time to respond to the free-text section of the questionnaire. Two-thirds of these comments were positive, but the remaining third expressed some concerns. The positive comments praised the leadership of the school and the way that staff care for their children. They also spoke positively about the range of enrichment activities. The main concerns related to homework, dissatisfaction with the way incidents of bullying are dealt with, and poor communication.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel valued and well supported by senior leaders. This was summed up by the view of one member of staff, who said: 'The headteacher will do the best he can for you. He puts the well-being of staff at the heart of everything.' Newly qualified teachers feel particularly well supported. They value the weekly professional development sessions and feel that this programme helps them to develop their practice.

Governance of the school

- The governing body comprises a group of people who have the necessary expertise and skills to provide the headteacher with effective support. This high-quality support contributes significantly to the way that the headteacher handles challenging situations. The governors are reflective and proactive in the way that they operate. For example, in response to concerns raised last year, they carried out their own safeguarding review. Keen to ensure that safeguarding was effective in the school, they then approached the local authority to conduct an external review into this area.
- Governors understand the strengths of the school and areas that require further improvement. However, they have not challenged senior leaders effectively enough on the impact of some key curriculum decisions. This is particularly the case in relation to possible implications for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. In the last year, there have been some concerns raised in relation to safeguarding. In response, senior leaders have thoroughly reviewed all aspects of safeguarding procedures and protocols in school. In a small number of areas, they have made minor amendments to sharpen their practice.

Inspection evidence confirms that all of these systems are fit for purpose.

- The headteacher understands the importance of ensuring that a strong safeguarding culture exists throughout the school. He ensures that all staff understand the important part that they play in keeping pupils safe. Staff receive regular training on potential areas of risk to young people. Staff know what to do should they have any concerns. Leaders engage effectively with parents on issues related to safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While strong teaching does exist, this is not consistent across the school. This inconsistency means that not all pupils benefit from routinely high-quality teaching. This variation exists both within and between departments.
- Leaders acknowledge that some poor-quality teaching in mathematics contributed significantly to the poor progress that pupils made in this subject in 2017. They have since taken action to ensure that more pupils experience better teaching in this department. While the situation has improved, pupils' work and progress show that teaching is not yet consistently good in this subject.
- The picture is much more positive in English, where pupils routinely benefit from high-quality teaching. Teachers' strong subject knowledge makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress in English. Pupils of all ages are supported and challenged to develop their writing and analytical skills.
- This challenge is not seen routinely across the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve. This limits pupils' progress and prevents them from attaining the highest grades.
- This variation in teachers' expectations is evident in the quality of pupils' work. Some teachers do not challenge incomplete or poor-quality work, nor do they encourage pupils to take pride in their presentation. Inspectors noted that sometimes teachers give pupils positive 'attitudes to learning' grades even when the quality of their work clearly does not warrant them.
- In many classrooms, it is clear that positive relationships exist between pupils and their teachers. When this is coupled with high expectations, these strong relationships contribute significantly to pupils' progress and love of learning.
- The quality of teaching in the resourced provision is strong, and excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils. Staff know their pupils extremely well and provide them with the right level of support. Work is set at an appropriate level, which helps pupils to make good progress.
- Several pupils and parents have concerns about the current homework arrangements. The main issue is that pupils feel overwhelmed when they receive homework for multiple subjects at the same time. This has a negative impact on how effectively they can complete what has been set. Some parents feel that their children become disheartened after spending considerable time on homework, particularly project work, and receiving little feedback. There is little convincing evidence that the current homework system is making a significant contribution to improving pupils' progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- It is clear that the headteacher sees pupils' wider personal development as a very important aspect of their education. He makes sure that all key stage 3 pupils have the opportunity to access a wide range of enrichment activities through 'The Edge' programme every fortnight. Other aspects of personal development and welfare are covered in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. New leadership of this area has raised the profile of PSHE in school. However, leaders acknowledge that the work on improving the PSHE curriculum and delivery is ongoing.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils exist in school and these contribute positively to pupils' welfare. Heads of year provide personalised support for pupils in their care. They are particularly effective at working with external agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils and their families.
- Most of the pupils who responded to the online questionnaire and who spoke with inspectors feel that bullying is not a problem in school, and if it does happen then it is dealt with effectively. However, a small number of pupils and parents are not happy about how incidents of bullying are dealt with. The school's records of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, indicate that there have only been a small number of incidents. Each incident is clearly logged but outcomes are not always recorded.
- Leaders only ever use alternative provision for a very small number of pupils. When this is the case, leaders have frequent contact with the external provider. They are proactive in checking on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of each pupil. Because the placements are carefully selected, pupils flourish in the alternative environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils behave well around school. During break and lunchtime their behaviour is calm and mature, which is particularly impressive as the dining areas are very crowded. They socialise well and show respect for each other and the many staff on duty.
- The majority of pupils behave well in their lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. On some occasions, particularly in key stage 3, pupils' engagement with their learning dips, leading to low-level disruption. In most cases this occurs when the learning does not challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not attend school regularly. The overall and persistent absence figures for these groups of pupils are well above national averages. Leaders do not work strategically enough to monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions that different members of staff are taking to tackle this situation. Work in this area is too disjointed and lacks coordination. The school has recently appointed an attendance officer, but the remit of her role is still being developed.

- When disadvantaged pupils do attend school, they are more likely than their peers to be excluded. A small group of disadvantaged pupils miss many days in school through poor attendance or too-frequent exclusions, which has a significant detrimental impact on their achievement. Again, effective strategic leadership of this area is urgently required to tackle this worrying situation.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- During their time at Hazel Grove, pupils generally make progress at a rate similar to that of others nationally. Pupils' overall attainment in English and mathematics combined is also broadly in line with the national average.
- Although the overall progress and attainment figures are broadly in line with national averages, pupils' outcomes in mathematics are not good. In 2017, the rate of progress for pupils in this subject was in the bottom 20% in the country. Disadvantaged pupils made particularly poor progress. Despite the high priority that leaders have given to improving outcomes in mathematics, the school's most recent assessment information indicates that pupils in Year 11 are still not making good progress. However, this information does show that pupils lower down the school are making better progress in mathematics.
- Current assessment information indicates that, in key stage 4, a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils than their peers are on track to meet their target grades. For a small group of disadvantaged pupils, it is clear that very poor attendance and a high number of exclusions are having a significant detrimental effect on their progress and attainment.
- In English in 2017, outcomes for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, were stronger than in mathematics. Pupils currently in school are making good progress in this subject, with a high proportion on track to meet their target grades.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school mean that there is variation in the rates of progress that pupils are making both within and between subjects. For example, in science, inspection evidence indicates that pupils are generally challenged more effectively in key stage 3 than they are in key stage 4.
- As a result of high-quality teaching and appropriate support, pupils in the resourced provision make good progress.
- All pupils have aspirational targets. Their progress towards achieving these targets is assessed each half-term. Leadership of this aspect of the school is distributed across several members of the senior team. This means that lines of accountability are not clear. Work is ongoing to hone the school's assessment system to ensure that the information is accurate and can be used effectively to improve pupils' progress.
- Destination information for recent years shows that the proportion of Year 11 pupils who go on to further education, training or employment is in line with the national average. In the last two years, approximately a third of the Year 11 cohort has progressed into the sixth form. A lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils decide to stay on in the sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Following the last inspection, the headteacher made it a high priority to improve the school's sixth-form provision. He has been successful in this aim. Effective leadership of the sixth form now means that students benefit from a high-quality post-16 experience.
- The head of sixth form has a clear understanding of the strengths and the small number of areas that still require further improvement in post-16 provision. Under his leadership, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and students' achievement across a wide range of academic subjects. The systems for monitoring teaching and learning are thorough. Teaching in the sixth form is routinely good.
- The relatively small size of the sixth form means that staff know their students very well. Consequently, they are able to ensure that each one follows an appropriate personalised study programme that enables them to move on to higher education, training or full-time employment.
- Students made better progress in 2017 than in the previous two years. Their progress was broadly in line with national averages across a wide range of academic subjects. The school's own assessment information indicates that students currently in the sixth form are making good progress. Leaders have analysed the reasons for past underperformance and are taking appropriate action to improve outcomes in these subjects. For example, a key focus for staff training this year has been how to ensure that the most able students attain the highest A-level grades.
- All students who have not attained a grade 5 in GCSE English and mathematics retake these qualifications. They are provided with high-quality teaching and support in these subjects. Consequently, the success rates when students retake these examinations are very high. For example, this year, all students who entered the English examination early improved their grade. Two-thirds of those who entered early in mathematics improved their grade.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance are strong in the sixth form. Students' transitions to and from the sixth form are well supported. Students speak very positively of the support that they receive when applying to higher education. Leaders ensure that students also have the right information about degree-level apprenticeships. All students complete a work experience placement in Year 12 that is tailored to their interests and aspirations. Students believe this to be a worthwhile experience that supports their future career plans.
- Safeguarding in the sixth form is effective. All safeguarding procedures and systems are fit for purpose. For example, there is a very effective 'fob' system which students use to sign in and out. Students' welfare, well-being and personal development are a high priority for leaders. A well-structured and relevant PSHE programme is delivered by form tutors.
- Students value the very positive relationships that they have with their teachers and tutors. They appreciate the attention that they receive from staff, particularly in the small teaching groups. Students are well cared for in an environment that values everyone as an individual. Hazel Grove sixth form is a happy place where students are comfortable to be themselves, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or

transgender.

- Students have opportunities to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities, often as part of 'The Edge' programme every fortnight. A high priority for leaders is that students contribute to the school and wider community, for example by volunteering at a local primary school. The majority of Year 12 students take the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), which strengthens their university applications.

School details

Unique reference number	137923
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10042639

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	1,210
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	107
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Keith Harrington
Headteacher	Mark Sibson
Telephone number	01614 564888
Website	www.hazelgrovehigh.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@hazelgrovehigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized school. The number on roll has increased since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average but a higher-than-average proportion of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- The school has a specialist resourced provision for pupils who have severe or profound multiple learning difficulties.
- The school uses alternative provision for only a very small number of pupils. At the time of the inspection, SMS Education in Stockport was the only provider being used.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards. The floor standards set the minimum expectations for progress and attainment at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across a range of subjects, including joint observations with leaders. Inspectors looked at pupils' work during their observations. An inspector carried out a work scrutiny with a senior leader.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils. They also talked with others informally during breaks and lunchtimes. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, pastoral staff and classroom teachers, including those newly and recently qualified. A meeting was held with the chair and one other member of the governing body. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 154 responses to Ofsted's online 'Parent View' survey, and the 73 free-text responses.
- Inspectors took into account the 162 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and the 82 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and development plan; information about the school's performance; and a selection of policies, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

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Jane Austin	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
John McNally	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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