

The Nicholas Hamond Academy

Brandon Road, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 7DZ

Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 2017

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

- Outcomes are not yet good. Leaders have not built on the improvements recognised in the previous inspection report and so outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4 remain below national levels.
- In 2016 and 2017, progress at the end of key stage 4 was in line with national expectations. However, the proportion of pupils who gain good GCSE grades in both English and mathematics remains below that of other pupils nationally.
- Teaching is not yet good enough across all subjects, particularly in science, modern foreign languages and humanities, and so pupils do not make the progress they should in these subjects.
- At key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is below the national average.
- Teachers do not routinely use the information available to them about the needs of individual pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to plan strategies that accelerate progress.
- Some pupils do not behave well in lessons and the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils creates a disorderly atmosphere around the school at times.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to gain experience and develop understanding of cultures and beliefs that are different from their own.
- Not enough teaching inspires pupils with the desire to learn and teachers do not routinely reward pupils when they do well.

The school has the following strengths

- The progress pupils make in English and mathematics is accelerating.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the current position of the school and development plans are firmly focused on improving teaching and outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- There are many examples of good teaching and effective practice that are now being shared across the school.
- Sixth form provision is good. It provides a range of courses which allow students who do not achieve the highest grades at GCSE to successfully access further education and training.
- More effective middle leaders are now driving improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in English, humanities and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to learn about, and so develop, an understanding of the wide variety of lifestyles, cultures and beliefs that make up modern Britain
 - ensuring that pupils are praised when they do well, so that positive attitudes to learning are rewarded.
- Improve outcomes so that achievement is at least in line with national averages in all subjects and for all pupil groups by:
 - accelerating the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who enter the school with above-average attainment
 - improving the progress pupils make in science and modern foreign languages
 - ensuring that all teachers use information on individual pupils' needs to plan teaching strategies which effectively accelerate their progress.
- Improve teaching in the school to good or better by:
 - reducing the use of non-specialist and temporary teachers that lead to poor experiences for pupils
 - ensuring that teachers plan tasks which stimulate and challenge all groups of pupils and so encourage their enthusiasm for learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has had a turbulent year since the dismissal of the principal in October 2016, followed by a major staff restructure. The school has an acting principal who was supported for one term by an executive principal from another Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) school. During this period of instability, improvements seen during the previous inspection in May 2014 stalled and, at the present time, governors have still to appoint a substantive principal to lead the academy.
- Governors and senior leaders do have a realistic view of the current position of the school and where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Some new leaders are in the process of developing their skills in senior leadership roles. They are overseeing a range of initiatives designed to enhance teaching and learning and improve how assessment information is used to identify and tackle underachievement. However, they have not yet had sufficient time to be able to fully evaluate the relative effectiveness of these initiatives.
- The school has struggled to appoint permanent, fully qualified science teachers and both parents and pupils commented on the negative impact this has had on the attitude of pupils towards science, as well as the progress they make in their learning.
- Middle leadership has, however, been strengthened through new appointments in English, mathematics and humanities. These subject leaders are having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching in their subject areas and, because of this, the progress of pupils, especially those in Year 11, is accelerating.
- Overall, the curriculum available to pupils in all key stages is varied and offers a good balance of academic and vocational subjects. Leaders regularly review and adapt curriculum provision to ensure that it is meeting the needs of pupils.
- The school delivers a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education through 'deep learning days', assemblies and lesson time activities. However, lessons designed to develop tolerance and understanding of other cultures and ways of living do not feature prominently enough and so pupils are not being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that strategies to help pupils entitled to the extra pupil premium funding have had little impact in diminishing the differences in their progress and attainment compared with other pupils nationally. There have been some small improvements in attendance and, in 2017, the gap in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 4 closed slightly. A renewed drive, based on a clearer understanding of the barriers these pupils have to overcome, is now being led by a knowledgeable and committed senior leader.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of the needs of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Personalised support plans for these pupils are effective. However, leaders do not routinely check whether classroom teachers are applying strategies to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or

disabilities in lessons. Leaders are also due to review pupils currently on the SEN register to ensure that their needs have been accurately identified.

- Leaders of teaching and learning know where improvements need to be made and the academy trust has provided subject specialists to work with middle leaders to raise the expectations of teachers. Training and support are available to teachers who need to improve their practice and, increasingly, the good practice already evident in the school is being shared. Teachers new to the profession are well supported. Performance management is clearly based on outcomes for pupils as well as classroom performance.

Governance of the school

- The school has its own governing body and chair, with representatives from ATT as governing body members. The academy trust provides support across a range of areas such as safeguarding, managing the school site and ensuring safe internet access at the school. Governors bring a breadth of experience to their roles, ranging from expertise in finance and business management as well as the world of education. However, actions to support current leaders taken after the dismissal of the previous principal have not prevented a fall in standards.
- The governing body has a secure knowledge of the strengths of the school and the areas where improvement is needed. Governors visit the school regularly and, through interviews with pupil groups, gather useful information and evidence which are used to challenge school leaders more effectively. Governors monitor the spending of the pupil premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding, and receive regular reports about how well these pupils are doing, including improvements in attendance.
- With support from the academy trust, the governing body has recently managed a restructure of staffing in order to keep the school financially viable.
- Governors hold teachers to account for the performance of pupils and have withheld pay awards when teachers have not met their targets relating to pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Following the dismissal of the principal in 2016, which raised concerns over safeguarding procedures, the academy trust stepped in with knowledgeable and proactive guidance to ensure that pupils at the school were safe. The school's current systems for checking that staff are suitable to work with young people are robust.
- Procedures to identify and respond to any concerns about pupils are rigorous. Vulnerable pupils are supported well and communication with parents and carers in these cases is clear. Working relationships with other agencies to keep children safe are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because the impact it has on pupils' progress varies across subjects and key stages. Teaching seen in the sixth form was consistently good with students actively engaged in their learning.

- Not enough lessons in key stages 3 and 4 inspire pupils with a desire to learn. Too often, pupils of different abilities are given the same tasks to complete. This means that some pupils find them too difficult and others find them too easy. In both situations, pupils can give up and become distracted and, at times, this leads to poor behaviour which distracts other pupils from learning.
- Teaching is particularly weak in science, because changes of teacher and the use of too many non-specialist teachers have led to variable experiences for pupils. This confuses and frustrates pupils and work in their books shows little evidence of sustained progress over time. Where pupils are taught by a science teacher, they show interest in their learning and are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding. However, pupils told inspectors that, too often, they are required simply to fill in worksheets or copy information from the board and their work is rarely assessed. When the work does not interest them, or provide enough challenge, pupils become bored and quickly lose focus on their learning.
- Teachers do not routinely adapt work to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Although the SEN leader has made information available to teachers about which strategies will best support these pupils in class, not all teachers use this to inform their planning. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their varied starting points in small-group support lessons, but this progress is not always maintained when they are in lessons with other pupils.
- Other than in science, teachers usually mark pupils' books regularly and expect pupils to respond to their advice in line with school policy. English books in particular showed clear evidence that their response to teachers' feedback has deepened pupils' understanding and improved their analytical skills.
- When teaching is well planned and pitched at the right level for the pupils in the class, pupils become enthusiastic, enjoy their lessons and make good progress. In these classrooms, relationships between pupils and teachers are positive and pupils' natural curiosity is drawn out, because teachers present them with stimulating activities and use skilful questioning to develop their understanding.
- Inspectors saw clear pupil engagement, leading to good progress across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, physical education (PE) and history. In a Year 10 PE lesson, pupils were filmed playing badminton and, prompted by the teacher's astute questioning, were able to give each other immediate feedback on how to improve. Because of this, pupils made good progress during the lesson.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about, or experience, cultures and lifestyles different from their own, and so do not develop a comprehensive understanding of the breadth and diversity that is part of life in modern Britain.
- Assemblies and 'deep learning days' raise pupils' awareness of issues such as coping with peer pressure, the dangers of drug use and mental health. Tutor time, where pupils are in mixed year groups, provide opportunities for them to discuss topics such

as the influence of families and friends, as well as participating in team-building activities. Pupils spoke confidently to inspectors about how to keep themselves safe online and outside the school.

- Pupils are aware of the dangers of different types of bullying through assemblies and work in lessons. They say that bullying does happen at the school, but it is dealt with well by staff when it is reported.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While most pupils behaved with respect towards each other and towards adults, during lesson changes corridors were noisy and, at times, disorderly because of the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. The proportion of pupils excluded for poor behaviour is still above the national average.
- Pupils told inspectors that their learning is too often interrupted by the behaviour of other pupils, although a new behaviour management system in place since the October half term has had some impact on improving behaviour in lessons. Inspectors saw low-level disruption in lessons when pupils were not challenged or engaged by the tasks given to them by teachers. Pupils feel that while sanctions are used consistently by teachers, they are not rewarded very much for good work in class and there was no widely respected reward system in place.
- The attendance of all groups of pupils, but particularly those who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities, is below the national average. Senior leaders have worked hard with pupils and parents and, so far this year, attendance is better than at the same time in 2016. However, the levels of persistent absence remain too high and the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not declining rapidly enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In both 2016 and 2017, at key stage 4, pupils made overall progress in line with the national average. Although pupils made much better progress in English in 2017, results overall do not represent an improvement. This is because outcomes in science, modern foreign languages and humanities, which were in the lowest 10% of schools nationally in 2016, were no better in 2017.
- A high number of pupils took the English Baccalaureate route in 2017, but the proportion of those who actually achieved it was below the national average. Similarly, only 50% of pupils achieved a pass at GCSE grades 9 to 4 in English and in mathematics, which was below that of most other schools.
- However, outcomes in a range of subjects outside the English Baccalaureate were comparatively strong in both 2016 and 2017, and demonstrated progress that was at least in line with national averages. Subjects such as drama and PE are continuing to build on these successful outcomes this year.
- In 2016, the overall progress made by disadvantaged pupils was significantly below that of other pupils nationally. 2017 outcomes show slightly better progress for this group, although their attainment remains lower than that of other pupils who have

similar starting points. More time is needed for the school's new strategy for disadvantaged pupils to embed and impact fully on raising their achievement.

- More systematic testing and analysis of assessment information is giving senior and middle leaders a clearer picture of how pupils are doing, particularly at key stage 4. School information shows that, in English, mathematics and humanities, Year 11 pupils are currently making good progress because of better teaching and an improved curriculum. Both English and mathematics departments have benefited from support from ATT lead practitioners in these areas. Observations during the inspection and scrutiny of the work in pupils' books confirm that progress is improving in these areas.
- The progress from their particular starting points made by some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good because of personalised programmes of support. This is especially true of those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. However, some pupils who rely mainly on extra support from class teachers do not make as much progress because their individual needs are not as well understood.
- The proportion of pupils who enter the school in Year 7 and who are not yet working at the standard expected by the end of key stage 2 is higher than average. These pupils follow a separate curriculum which focuses on literacy, numeracy and humanities as well as developing social skills. They join other pupils for lessons such as art and PE. There is evidence that the reading programme raises the reading ages of this group, but the impact of other support, both academic and social, is less well analysed. While most pupils successfully rejoin other pupils in lessons in Year 8, some do struggle to settle back into the normal school environment.
- From their different starting points, pupils with below-average or average attainment on entry make better progress than those who join the school with above average attainment. In some subject areas, such as English, mathematics and history, higher expectations of the most able pupils is leading to this group making more rapid progress.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive helpful advice in Year 9, when they choose their GCSE subjects, and in Year 11 to guide them towards the right courses which match their interests and career aspirations. While some pupils stay on in the school's sixth form, others choose apprenticeships or courses elsewhere.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good. A key feature of the sixth form is its open entry policy and its provision of a mixture of academic and vocational courses to suit the needs of its students. Some students enter the sixth form with lower qualifications than would be expected nationally. Careers advice and guidance for those in the sixth form are highly effective. This enables students to make informed decisions about the next steps in their education. As a result, all students move on to appropriate higher education courses, further training or employment.
- Sixth form numbers are small and the school customises its provision to suit the needs of the students who choose to stay on in any particular year. This makes year-on-year comparisons of progress and retention rates difficult. However, in 2016 and 2017, the progress made by students following vocational courses was broadly in line with others nationally, with students being awarded, on average, a distinction. Academic progress

across subjects is more variable but, overall, students make less progress than other students nationally.

- A high number of students without passes at GCSE English or mathematics join the sixth form. The proportion of these students who improved their grade and achieved a good pass in these subjects exceeded national averages in 2016, although this does vary year on year. Students who choose to stay on for one year to improve their GCSE grades in English and mathematics are also able to gain further level 2 qualifications.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form are good. Class sizes vary and some involve only two or three students. Sixth form students do not regret their decision to choose their courses even though numbers are small. Students appreciate the level of personal attention they receive from teachers and, because of this, students' confidence builds steadily. Students told inspectors that they end up achieving higher qualifications than they thought possible when they joined the sixth form.
- The work of the sixth form to promote the personal development, behaviour and welfare of students is effective. Students are developing their skills as learners successfully. They take pride in their school and in their work, and are committed to doing well. They conduct themselves in a mature and responsible way, and are strong role models for younger pupils.
- The school meets the requirements for the provision of 16 to 19 study programmes. All students, whether taking academic or vocational subjects, undertake work experience. There are opportunities to learn about student finance and budgeting, how to keep healthy, how to drive responsibly and how to stay safe from being drawn into extremism. Students also raise money for charity and run weekly extra-curricular activities for younger students.

School details

Unique reference number	138918
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10036233

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
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	660
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judy Anscombe
Acting Principal	Martin Booth
Telephone number	01760721480
Website	http://tnha.org.uk
Email address	jill.hambright@tnha.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school. The sixth form provision also has a smaller number of students than other sixth forms nationally. The school is sponsored by the Academy Transformation Trust (ATT).
- The school has been without a substantive principal for over a year. An acting principal is currently leading the school and has been supported for part of this time by an executive principal appointed by the ATT.
- The majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average. The school has a higher proportion of service children than is usual because of a local military base. These pupils often arrive and leave the school during the academic year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 46 lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Some of these visits were carried out jointly with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with representatives from ATT and the governing body, the acting principal and other members of the senior team, middle leaders and teachers new to the profession.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, looked at the work in their books and talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and school life.
- Inspectors scrutinised information provided by the school relating to the progress and attainment of its pupils, the management of the school, the behaviour of pupils and its arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents who had responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as parental surveys provided by the school.

Inspection team

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Simon Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Garrett	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Gwyneth Gibson	Her Majesty's Inspector

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