

Guilsborough School

West Haddon Road, Guilsborough, Northampton, NN6 8QE

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics, because of the good teaching, care and guidance they receive.
- The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 is well above the national average.
- The headteacher and leadership team, well supported by the governors, are committed to making the school's mission statement 'Striving for excellence' a reality.
- GCSE results have been consistently well above average since the school opened as an academy, and in 2013 they were better than ever.
- The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities and additional activities that promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Behaviour is good. The school is a happy and harmonious community. Students show pride in their school and relationships are good.
- Students feel safe and have a good understanding of how to manage risks to their own safety.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and are very successful in gaining entry to university, further education and training. They are well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although leaders have taken firm and decisive action to improve teaching, they have not yet made sure that some students who have special educational needs or are supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as their classmates.
- Marking does not always help students to know how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 41 lessons. They were accompanied by a member of the school’s leadership team in five of the observations. In addition, they carried out short visits to classrooms across a range of subjects, and visited assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other senior leaders, and teachers who hold additional responsibilities. A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They held meetings with three different groups of students representing all year groups, and attended a meeting of the Student Senate.
- The inspectors looked at work in students’ books across a range of subjects and year groups.
- The inspectors took into account the school’s information about students’ progress, achievement, behaviour, attendance and exclusions. They looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping students safe.
- Inspectors looked at the way that the school checks how good teaching is, and how leaders set targets to help teachers to improve their teaching.
- The inspectors took into account 143 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and spoke to parents on the phone.
- The inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
 - safeguarding procedures meet requirements, including the response to pupils who present challenging behaviour
 - suitable adjustments are made to behaviour management procedures according to the students’ needs and disabilities
 - staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support where required
 - leaders and the governing body are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for behaviour and safeguarding within school.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Easter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
June Cannie	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector
Helen Masefield	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Guilsborough School converted to become an academy in February 2011. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged outstanding.
- The school is larger than the average-sized academy with a sixth form.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. This additional funding is provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in local authority care, or have a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- There are currently eight students who attend Pury Hill, Moulton College and Rushmere Academy to follow alternative courses.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is designated as a specialist technology college. It is a member of the Leading Edge Schools Programme, the Challenge Partners programme and the SWAN (South West Area Northamptonshire secondary schools educational partnership). It is a member of the Grand Union Training Partnership which provides initial teacher training linked to a local university. The headteacher is a National Leader of Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Monitor the achievement of students who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium, to ensure work matched closely to their abilities leads to more rapid progress.
- Improve the impact of teachers' marking and feedback on students' work by sharing the high-quality practice that already exists in some subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is close to, or slightly above, the national average. For each of the past three years, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics by the end of Year 11 has been above the national average. The proportion of students attaining A* and A grades at GCSE in English and mathematics is well above the national average.
- Specialist technology college status has led to improved outcomes in the subject specialisms of mathematics, science and design technology. In 2013, the percentages of students achieving A* to C grades in mathematics, biology, chemistry, food technology, resistant materials and electronic products were well above the national averages.
- Students begin their Key Stage 4 programmes of study in Year 9 and enter early for GCSE in a number of subjects in Years 10 and 11 when they are working at their target grade. This allows students to study a wide variety of GCSE courses. Able students are given the opportunity to study statistics or further mathematics and those that need extra help to achieve their target grades are given it. GCSE results from early entry indicate that a significant number of students in the current Year 11 have already achieved the higher grades in English and mathematics.
- The large majority of students make at least expected progress in English and mathematics, and a high proportion make better than expected progress.
- Students eligible for additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding are given additional support in intensive six-week programmes to help develop their reading and their understanding of mathematics. Current data show that this is having a good impact on raising standards.
- In 2012 and 2013, some pupils who had special educational needs achieved significantly less well than similar students nationally. In many cases the progress of students eligible for pupil premium funding has also been slower than that of their classmates. In 2012 these students' Year 11 results were, on average, about two thirds of a grade behind their peers, and in 2013 the gap was even wider at two grades. School data and the work seen in lessons and books show that the school has done much to improve the achievement of both groups this year. A wide range of additional support and extra resources have meant that their progress is improving, and is now often good, but this has not been happening long enough to close attainment gaps.
- The school uses a range of strategies to encourage students to read widely. Students have regular library lessons where they improve their reading skills and are encouraged to read for pleasure. Sixth form mentors support the regular twice-weekly reading sessions in form time.
- The sixth form offers a wide range of academic and work-related subjects, and students' progress is good. Students achieve well and are very successful in gaining entry to university, further education and training.
- The small number of students who study work-related and other subjects off the school site as part of their education are making good progress and gaining appropriate qualifications. The school checks their progress closely and on a regular basis.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most subjects is typically good, and in some cases outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they aim high. The school mission statement 'Striving for Excellence' aptly describes the whole-school focus on high expectations for students and staff.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive. Students say that they enjoy coming to school and they speak positively about their teachers' enthusiasm and commitment. One told inspectors, 'Teachers go the extra mile by offering their time outside lessons, at lunchtime and after school.'
- Specialist technology status has led to an ongoing focus on improving the quality of teaching in the specialist subjects. This, in turn, has led to improvements across the whole teaching team. Teachers share their good practice and work together across departments in trios to look closely at their teaching, and support one another in making improvements.
- Teachers often plan lessons that interest the students so that they enjoy learning. For example, in a Year 7 design and technology lesson, students were making chocolate moulds. Each group member had a role in developing a presentation and, as a result, all were engaged and there were high levels of participation and enthusiasm. The task motivated students so that, regardless of their starting point, they made rapid progress.
- Teachers prepare students well for GCSE, AS-level and A-level examinations. In English lessons, for example, students are familiar with the mark schemes. Because of the carefully planned approach that teachers take, students are very clear about how they need to tackle questions. As a result, the majority of students in English achieve well.
- Teachers are generally skilled in checking whether students understand what they are learning by asking questions and setting tasks that make them think hard. In a mathematics lesson where learning and progress were outstanding, the teacher used 'exit passes' at the end of the lesson to check pupils' understanding of the topics covered. By frequently checking how well students are doing, teachers are able to plan further work at the right level of difficulty.
- Some teachers mark students' work regularly and in detail, and encourage students to take responsibility by giving them clear advice so that they can improve their work. Students often act on the teachers' comments and this leads to improved standards and good progress. However, in some cases, marking is too brief to be helpful. Students' books can be messy, and spelling and grammatical errors are not checked. Teachers do not always check that students follow the advice they are given through marking.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively. Teachers regularly take the time in lessons to focus on key subject vocabulary. Teachers share effective approaches to developing literacy and numeracy skills. For example, teachers in the mathematics department have worked with other subject teachers to ensure common approaches to key mathematical processes, and to ensure that all use the same language and terminology. This helps students to apply the skills that they have learned in mathematics in other subjects.
- In lessons where learning and progress are particularly good, teachers plan a variety of activities and use different resources so that, whatever their starting point, lessons are well matched to students' abilities. For example, in a physical education lesson, the teacher carefully planned the groups that students worked in so that all participated well, and developed their skills and understanding of the rules of hockey. As a result, all of the students made rapid progress.

- Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to trying different ways of improving their teaching. For example, they have recently focused on developing 'flip teaching' where students research a particular topic and find things out for themselves, so that in the lessons they can talk about the key ideas and deepen their understanding. In a sixth form chemistry lesson, students were presenting the topic they had been researching to others in the class and the rest of the group were listening with great interest and curiosity. Teachers report that this approach is helping to students to learn, understand and make progress more effectively.
- Teaching assistants and learning mentors work closely with targeted students in one-to-one or small group teaching to help students catch up. The vast majority of support is within English and mathematics lessons. Teaching assistants liaise closely with subject teachers to ensure that work is adapted so that students are well supported in these subjects.
- In some cases teachers do not match lesson activities well to the students' differing ability levels. In lessons where students lose concentration and do not pay attention this is usually because the work is sometimes too difficult or too easy. Recent changes to the way that teachers plan for and support students who have special educational needs have not been in place long enough to judge how effective this will be.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently strong and often outstanding. It is underpinned by good subject knowledge and innovative approaches which fully engage and motivate students, producing good results across a wide range of subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious concern had been reported about behaviour and safety. While Ofsted does not investigate any specific incident, actions taken by the school in response to this concern were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all current requirements.
- Students say that they feel safe and well cared for, and the overwhelming majority of their parents agree. Students are confident that if they experienced any problems, their teachers would do all that they could to help them. They have a good understanding of bullying in all of its forms. Students told inspectors that they had learned about bullying in assemblies and as part of personal, social and health education, but that bullying hardly ever happens and if it did, it would be dealt with immediately.
- The behaviour of students is good. Students take pride in their school. They are friendly, polite and courteous. Relationships between students and their teachers are good. Students take care of the school environment. Displays of students' work in corridors and classrooms are of a high standard and treated with respect. There was no litter to be seen.
- Attendance is above average. It has improved because of good systems for preventing persistent absence. Students arrive at school on time and are punctual to their lessons. The pastoral support team, including non-teaching staff, have very good relationships with parents and external agencies. Learning mentors and support from the pastoral team help students who display more challenging behaviour. As a result the number of internal exclusions has reduced, as have fixed-term exclusions.

- Most students are eager to learn. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in almost every classroom. Students are cooperative and work very well together in pairs and groups. They listen to one another and respect each other's views. Very little time is wasted in lessons and, as a result, students make good progress in their learning.
- Students' attitudes to learning are occasionally less positive when teachers have not planned lessons that capture their interest or are not well matched to their abilities. However, even in these circumstances, most students maintain focus and concentration, and are keen to learn.
- Sixth form students make a very strong contribution to whole-school behaviour and safety. All sixth formers mentor students in the main school two days a week, support school clubs, and lead assemblies, such as a recent anti-bullying assembly. They are excellent ambassadors for the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team and the governing body are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They communicate high expectations of staff and students, and their very effective actions to improve teaching have eliminated inadequate teaching and raised the proportion that outstanding. As a result high overall standards are being maintained and achievement is rising, although some of the actions taken to boost the learning of pupils who have additional learning needs have not yet had a sustained impact.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The school offers a wide range of subjects and courses, both academic and work-related, and students are given clear guidance and support in selecting their options. Improved tracking systems have been introduced and regular checking of students' progress has led to strongly improved outcomes in Year 12 across a range of subjects.
- Information about students' attainment and progress is used well, and recently improved systems for presenting the information have helped leaders of subjects and teachers to be even clearer about students' progress. This has led to better planning and help for individual students, as well as assisting leaders of subjects to identify teaching which needs further improvement. They say the improved systems have helped them to give extra help to any students who are not meeting their targets.
- The specialist technology status has had a positive impact across the school. The leaders of the specialisms in mathematics, science and design have made a very strong contribution to teaching and learning. For example, the subject leader for mathematics leads the 'targeted intervention programme', the advanced skills teacher for science facilitates teaching and learning sessions, and the leader of design and technology has led improvements in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school.
- Teachers work together to coach one another and share good practice, both within the school and across the SWAN partnership. Teachers are enthusiastic about working together and learning from one another. Where teaching has required improvement, the leadership team has taken decisive action. As a result, an increasing amount of teaching is good or outstanding.
- The school's records on lessons observations are detailed and linked closely to the national *Teachers' Standards*. Teachers only qualify for pay rises and promotion if their performance is good, and leaders of subjects play a strong part in bringing about improvements.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy with the aim of ensuring a calm, orderly

working environment conducive to effective learning. They have also strengthened the pastoral support team and improved communication systems so that the response to positive or negative behaviour is more consistent.

- The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly through the curriculum and the wider life of the school. Students can take part in a wide range of clubs and activities, trips and events in music, art, drama and sport. They raise money for charity and are encouraged to think deeply about their responsibilities. The Student Senate gives students opportunities to express their opinions, debate ideas and be part of the decision-making processes in the school.
- Students in the sixth form support younger students in form time and in clubs. Year 7 students told inspectors that they particularly liked being helped by the sixth formers and getting to know older students. The mentoring scheme also provides excellent opportunities for sixth formers to develop their leadership skills.
- Parent View and the school's own surveys show that parents are overwhelmingly positive about their children's education.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are highly committed to the school and share the aspirations of the headteacher. Governors know the school well because they visit often, talk to students and teachers and look at performance data carefully. They interpret information accurately and this helps them to keep abreast of the quality of teaching and how well the school is doing. They make sure that safeguarding and safe recruitment policies keep students safe. Individual governors receive regular training and, between them, have a wide range of skills and expertise. This ensures that they ask challenging questions and hold the school to account. They review the headteacher's performance and check that the management of performance of all staff is helping them to improve. Where it is not, swift action is taken. Governors are fully involved in decisions to reward teachers who have performed particularly well and helped their students to make rapid progress. The governors manage financial resources efficiently, and are aware of how additional funding such as the pupil premium is being used to boost the achievement of eligible students.

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	136489
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	440664

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 converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1294
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Carter
Headteacher	Christine Staley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01604 740641
Fax number	01604 749104
Email address	info@guilsborough.northants.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

