

Lady Hawkins' School

Park View, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3AR

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The newly appointed headteacher has given a fresh impetus to the improvement of the school. He has chosen his priorities wisely, and secured the wholehearted support of the school community.
- Middle leaders are making an effective contribution to raising standards, and are eager to increase their contribution further.
- Several new appointments have revitalised the governing body, and developed its communication with parents and carers.
- Teaching is good, and improving rapidly in English. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and set high expectations for their pupils. Inspectors saw many less-able pupils learning particularly well.
- Teachers recognise the importance of setting work that challenges the most able, but sometimes do not do so effectively. Most-able pupils complete too much routine work before starting tasks that stretch them.
- Teaching in mathematics rarely challenges pupils to develop their own mathematical thinking.
- Leaders do not monitor standards in a few smaller subjects sufficiently rigorously.
- Year 11 pupils left in 2017 having made average progress overall. However, progress is accelerating so that it is now strong across the school.
- Standards in humanities and modern foreign languages are high.
- Despite the restrictions presented by small year groups, leaders have implemented a balanced curriculum. A wide variety of clubs and trips makes a strong contribution to many pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils rightly feel safe in school. Behaviour is improving, and pupils conduct themselves consistently well in the classroom and at social times.
- The headteacher has taken important steps to improve the availability of information about pupils' progress. However, the quality of assessment and the use that staff make of it remain variable.
- Leaders are developing new ways of providing pupils with feedback on their work. In the meantime, pupils' response to guidance on how to improve is sometimes limited.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that teachers consistently set work for the most able which provides an appropriately stiff level of challenge
 - ensuring that pupils make good use of the school's new procedures for feedback to improve their work
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to develop their ability to reason mathematically.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers have a secure understanding of a range of strategies for providing challenging work for the most able pupils
 - refining assessment procedures and extending the use that staff make of information about pupils' achievement to develop their teaching and target their academic support
 - monitoring the quality of provision in smaller subjects so that the teaching and pupils' progress are consistently good.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the headteacher started at the school in September, he has taken a measured but purposeful approach to improving standards. He has chosen priorities astutely, and ensured that the school community has the opportunity to contribute to decision-making. As a result, new procedures have already improved pupils' attitudes towards their work, and teachers' knowledge of their pupils' academic attainment and potential.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school, and their plans identify clearly actions, timescales and the staff responsible for tackling its weaknesses. During the inspection, leaders' views on the quality of teaching accorded with those of inspectors.
- The school's middle leaders, some of whom are newly appointed, have responded well to the headteacher's clearer direction. They have welcomed the invitation to become more actively involved in bettering teaching and learning. In recent months, these leaders have identified the most pressing issues in their departments and drawn up detailed plans for improvement.
- Staff speak warmly of a variety of recent training, and explained to inspectors how this had enabled them to improve their skills and understanding. They have drawn confidence from recognising good practice in other areas of the school, and looked outside the school for fresh ideas and specialist advice.
- The relatively small number of pupils in each year group prevents the school from offering a large number of optional subjects. However, leaders have ensured that those subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) provide a strong nucleus to the key stage 4 curriculum. Pupils can study for GCSEs in the single sciences. The school has run a number of courses for small groups of pupils with particular needs or interests. Leaders have made suitable arrangements for the small number of sixth-form students to complete their courses.
- Many pupils benefit from numerous clubs, particularly in sport. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of trips, including foreign visits, which deepen their cultural understanding. More regularly, taught lessons, assemblies and tutor time extend pupils' understanding of current affairs and a range of different cultures and traditions. Pupils take an active part in local community events. Thus, despite the school's rural location, pupils are generally well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils told inspectors that they received good advice on how to choose their options at key stage 4, and how to make the next steps towards their preferred careers. Inspection evidence showed that staff take particular care to advise disadvantaged pupils. As a result, in the typical year group, all pupils find an appropriate place in further education or training.
- Better planning and increasingly effective use of assessment have contributed to the effective expenditure of the pupil premium, the Year 7 catch-up premium and additional money provided for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Teachers now receive clear guidance on how to meet additional needs, and leaders evaluate the effectiveness of additional provision, albeit in rather general terms.

- The headteacher has significantly enhanced the quality of the information available to staff about pupils' academic potential and progress. Leaders use this information effectively to identify those pupils at risk of falling behind, and teachers use it increasingly well to plan pupils' work. Nevertheless, the school's internal assessment procedures are still developing, and the accuracy of teachers' judgements is not yet entirely secure. Some judgements are standardised or checked with those made by teachers in other schools; some are not.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, and subsequent guidance for teachers, are improving the quality of teaching. However, while the improvement is particularly evident in some departments, such as English, there is limited evidence in a few smaller departments of either effective monitoring or the associated improvements.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The formal review of governance conducted in September 2016 concluded that governors had improved the effectiveness of the governing body considerably since the inspection of 2015. They have subsequently met successfully some major challenges, including considering the closure of the sixth form, the appointment of a permanent headteacher and the impact of reducing pupil numbers. In December 2017, the board appointed several new governors, most of them parents, to increase representation from the community.
- The current governing body has a renewed energy and commitment. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and how it can improve. Minutes of their meetings show that governors hold leaders to account for pupils' progress, and for the expenditure of additional funding to support achievement of particular groups of pupils. Governors have made sure they are fully trained for their roles.
- Governors ensure that leaders fulfil all their obligations to keep pupils safe. They check on how well the school protects those individual pupils who require additional support, and how effectively it promotes pupils' physical and mental well-being. They have assessed the risks associated with the school's open site.
- Governors are rightly proud of the school's role and profile in the local community. They have sought recently to improve their communication with parents and other stakeholders. However, they also appreciate the need to ensure that pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and are equipped to move outside the local area should they wish to do so.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know pupils very well and are fully committed to the protection of all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Leaders work well with the other agencies which help to keep children safe. Staff are vigilant and know how to respond if they believe any pupil is at risk. They make appropriate checks on the welfare of the very few pupils who benefit from alternative provision.

- The school's organisational arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Policies and procedures reflect the latest legislation. Leaders have made sure that all staff are familiar with child protection guidance, and that some are trained to a higher level. They make the necessary checks when appointing new staff. Records are well maintained and stored securely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good, and improving, particularly in English. Leaders are using achievement information increasingly well to adapt teaching to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils. Teachers plan interesting and pacey lessons and, in general terms, work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers, including those teaching the 16 to 19 study programmes, have authoritative knowledge of their subjects.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are consistently good. Students on the 16 to 19 study programmes told inspectors that they valued particularly how well teachers knew their academic strengths and weaknesses, and tailored the learning accordingly. Pupils settle to their work quickly. Teachers have established effective classroom routines, so that lessons proceed without fuss. Teachers' high expectations and a series of interesting activities typically keep pupils wanting to learn. Teachers use time in lessons wisely.
- During the inspection, inspectors observed some particularly effective teaching of less-able pupils. The teachers knew pupils' existing abilities well, and both teachers and teaching assistants questioned pupils carefully to develop their understanding without doing the work for them. For example, in a mathematics lesson for a lower set in key stage 3, the teacher had prepared practical materials well suited to pupils' different abilities. The class then moved on swiftly to consider the underlying spatial ideas and how these would be recorded on a graph.
- Teachers usually use questioning very effectively. They check on pupils' understanding so that they can adapt their teaching if the need arises. At other times, questioning challenges pupils to think more deeply. Inspectors saw teachers requiring pupils to give longer answers and so help them to develop both their oracy and their ideas.
- Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills. Teachers set tasks which require pupils to find and retrieve information from both printed and online resources. In humanities especially, pupils are expected to write at length and to structure their writing carefully. Teachers use subject-specific vocabulary correctly, and expect pupils to do the same.
- Pupils also learn how to develop their numeracy skills in different curriculum areas. In mathematics, they develop fluency in performing increasingly demanding calculations, and learn how to solve practical problems. Pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning.
- The school is currently revising the ways in which teachers provide feedback to pupils on their work and how they can improve. Inspectors' scrutiny of workbooks during the inspection showed that many pupils currently do not learn as much as they should from their mistakes. Sometimes, teachers do not check that pupils have responded to feedback as they were asked to do.

- Teachers are well aware of the need to set work for the most able, or the most able pupils in a particular group, which stretches them. Some teaching achieved this successfully. Just occasionally during the inspection, the work for the most able was too difficult. More commonly, pupils worked through too much routine or easy work before starting the tasks that truly challenged them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils understand how their attitudes to learning contribute to their academic success and, as a result, they are willing and conscientious learners.
- All the pupils who spoke with inspectors saw the small size of the school as an advantage. They reported that all the pupils get along together, and that because staff know all the pupils well, they are well placed to resolve any problems. Pupils feel entirely safe in school and say that bullying never, or very rarely, occurs. Inspection evidence showed that staff plan effectively and sometimes imaginatively to meet the particular needs of individual pupils.
- Lessons in personal, social and health education teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in several respects. They learn, for example, about personal safety, substance misuse and how to protect their privacy online.
- Pupils readily recall learning in religious education lessons about different religions and cultures, and the importance of treating all people with respect. When tensions arose, the school invited a representative of the local authority to help to inform pupils' views about Travellers.
- Pupils have opportunities to serve the school community as school councillors, and to raise money for charity. Links with the local community are particularly strong. Pupils play a prominent part in community events, such as Remembrance Sunday and the town's Christmas market.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour on the corridors and at social times is orderly and responsible. Pupils treat staff, visitors and each other with respect. They play their part in looking after the school's facilities. Standards of uniform are high.
- Pupils arrive at lessons with the right equipment and display consistently positive attitudes towards their work. They present their work neatly, although boys' presentation still lags a little behind that of girls. During the inspection, inspectors witnessed only minor inattention. Pupils reported that the school's new behaviour policy is leading to a further improvement in pupils' attitudes towards their learning, because expectations are clearer and applied more consistently.
- The school records incidents of poor conduct carefully, and documents show that such incidents are relatively rare. The rate of fixed-term exclusion rose in 2016 to be in line with the national average, and leaders continue to use this sanction appropriately for

the most serious offences. The school has excluded one pupil permanently since the last inspection.

- During the last academic year, pupils' attendance was above the national average. However, more recent records show that the rate of attendance has dipped, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Discussion revealed that the fall was largely caused by the absence of a relatively small number of individuals, and that leaders have put in place precise strategies to improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes are good. Information supplied by the school, observation in lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work showed inspectors that across the school pupils are making strong progress in English, mathematics, science and most other subjects. Progress is accelerating as teachers become more skilled in using information about pupils' potential and performance to adapt their teaching.
- Provisional results show that, in 2017, Year 11 pupils left the school having made progress from their starting points which was in line with the national average. This level of progress represented an improvement on that achieved by the cohort of pupils who left in 2016. Those students on both academic and vocational programmes who completed their 16 to 19 studies in 2017 had made average progress overall.
- Over recent years, pupils have achieved consistently well in the humanities subjects and in modern foreign languages. In 2017, the pupils left the school having made above average progress in humanities. Because both humanities and modern foreign languages are central to the English Baccalaureate, the proportion of pupils who have achieved the EBacc has been above the national average for the last two years.
- Until recently, pupils' progress in English has lagged a little behind that of most other subjects. However, leaders have recognised the need to improve the achievement of boys and less-able pupils in the subject, and inspection evidence showed that new strategies are clearly proving successful.
- During the inspection, inspectors found that many less-able pupils were making noticeably good progress from their lower starting points. Work was carefully tailored to their prior knowledge and understanding, and sustained their interest. The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is rising because staff have assessed their needs more accurately, and communicated effectively with teachers how the pupils learn best.
- Over recent years, disadvantaged pupils have made less progress than their peers, and less progress than other pupils nationally. In 2017, provisional results show that the school diminished the difference a little between the progress of the school's disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally. However, information supplied by the school showed that across the school, disadvantaged pupils are now progressing strongly, in step with their peers. Inspection evidence confirmed this, and found that some disadvantaged girls were performing particularly well.
- Since the last inspection, achievement in some subjects which are optional at key stage 4 has been comparatively weak. Inspection evidence showed that standards in a small

number of subjects at both key stage 3 and key stage 4 still lag behind those in the school generally.

- Year 7 pupils who spoke with inspectors said that the work they had been set was a clear step up from that which they had completed at primary school. Pupils' constructive attitudes, their increasing academic achievement and good advice on their future options mean that pupils are in turn well prepared for the next stage in their careers.

School details

Unique reference number	137608
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10042873

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

Type of school	Secondary
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	288
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	5
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Stephen Grist
Headteacher	Paul Jennings
Telephone number	01544 230441
Website	www.lhs.hereford.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@lhs.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 November 2015

Information about this school

- Lady Hawkins' School is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy trust has proposed the closure of the school's 16 to 19 study programmes, although this is subject to confirmation by the Department for Education. The current sixth form comprises a small number of Year 13 pupils completing their A-level studies. The inclusion of a separate section on 16 to 19 study programmes in this report would have risked the identification of individual students.
- Most of the pupils are White British.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is below average.
- At key stage 4, a very few pupils receive full-time or part-time alternative provision, either at Hereford and Ludlow College or from Herefordshire's Hospital and Home Teaching Team (HHTT).
- The headteacher and the head of English took up their posts in September 2017. The head of mathematics joined the school in January 2018.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress for pupils by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 28 lessons and one learning walk. Two of these lessons were part of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Three observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed tutor time and pupils' conduct before school, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body. He spoke by telephone with the headteacher of a local school who is advising the headteacher during his early months in post.
- Three groups of pupils, two chosen at random, met with inspectors. One group comprised students in the sixth form. Inspectors spoke with a large number of pupils informally.
- The inspectors looked at many workbooks in their visits to classrooms, and scrutinised in depth much of the work produced by some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in Year 10. They considered information about pupils' current and recent academic performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; the formal reviews of governance and the expenditure of the pupil premium advocated in the 2015 inspection report; policies; and the minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors scrutinised in detail records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 64 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and comments made using the free-text service. They also considered 19 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
David Buckle	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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