

# The Hart School

Penkrigde Bank Road, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 2UE

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The new headteacher, appointed after the last inspection, has provided strong leadership. He has established a clear vision for the school, which is well understood by staff and pupils.
- The Hart was formed by the amalgamation of Fair Oak and Hagley Park schools in September 2016. The new school exists to provide young people with an excellent education in the heart of their local community. It will move to a single site in September 2018.
- Senior and middle leaders are working hard to unify the different school communities. New expectations of behaviour and better teaching mean that pupil progress is improving rapidly. Most but not all parents are positive about the changes being made.
- Teaching has been strengthened in the last two years following significant changes to teaching and other staff. Earlier reliance on supply or non-specialist staff has reduced markedly. The use of assessment and the quality of the curriculum are good. Setting of homework is not consistent.
- Pupils usually behave well. They feel safe in school and low-level disruption has declined sharply. In a very few instances, pupils are inattentive or late to lessons. The school is a tolerant and welcoming community, which prepares pupils well for life after school. Attendance levels are good, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' GCSE results in 2016 were good. They dipped in 2017, including in English and mathematics, as a result of staffing difficulties and disruption caused by the amalgamation of the two schools. Many current pupils have shortfalls in knowledge, but these are being tackled quickly. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress from their starting points.
- The sixth form is well led. It has improved since the last inspection and provides a good quality of education. Sixth-form students work hard and are taught very well. Outcomes for academic and vocational programmes are good. Sixth formers receive effective support and advice, including when applying for university. However, they make a limited contribution to the wider life of the school.
- Governance is effective. Members of the academy council have a suitable blend of experience and expertise, which enables them to hold the school to account. A well-organised system of management information and reporting provides the basis for an effective relationship with the multi-academy trust (MAT).
- Senior officers from the MAT provide effective support for academy council leaders and academy council members. They have a keen understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the progress made by pupils so they all achieve good or better outcomes by:
  - continuing to rectify the shortfall in pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in mathematics and English
  - setting homework more consistently in line with school policy
  - tackling the few instances where pupils are inattentive or late to lessons.
- Encourage sixth formers to make a greater contribution to the wider life of the school when all pupils move to a single site in September 2018.
- Foster broader support for the new school among parents, and those with parental responsibility, by explaining more clearly how the merger is leading to improvements in the pupils' education.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The new headteacher has extensive experience. He provides very good leadership and management. He was appointed after the last inspection, following a period of turbulence, and has overseen the amalgamation of Fair Oak and Hagley Park schools. He has established a clear and compelling vision for a single school providing excellent education at the heart of its community. The school is consolidating all its provision onto the lower school site ready for September 2018.
- The headteacher is well supported by a hard-working group of senior leaders who have introduced higher expectations of pupil behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning, and the progress made by pupils. Together with staff and academy council members, they have overhauled the quality of education provided by the school. They listen to the views of pupils. Informative 'you said, we did' display boards are situated in key corridors.
- A small minority of staff have found it difficult to adjust to the new expectations. Difficulties with turnover of staff, including because of the amalgamation, contributed to recent weaknesses in provision. Robust action has been taken to recruit new, committed, qualified and hard-working staff. Earlier reliance on temporary and non-specialist teachers has reduced as new staff have been appointed. The great majority of staff are working very hard to realise the great potential afforded by the amalgamation.
- Most parents are supportive of the new vision for the school. A few have concerns about the use of supply or non-specialist teachers. A very small minority do not believe that the merger of the two schools is leading to better education for its pupils. Leaders are committed to working with these parents to demonstrate the benefits of the merger.
- Senior leaders make good use of detailed information about individual pupils, and their progress in subjects, to hold middle leaders and teachers to account for the quality of their work. New subject leaders are working with teachers in mathematics, science and English to ensure that pupils' progress accelerates rapidly towards expected levels.
- The quality of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is good. Pupils are given ample opportunities to reflect on themselves, their relationships with others and their place in the world. Wide extra-curricular opportunities extend pupils' horizons and provide different and meaningful experiences that enrich the formal curriculum, in particular through the regular 'life and soul' days.
- Pupils study the subjects of the national curriculum during key stage 3. Programmes of study have been reviewed to ensure that pupils build a suitable body of knowledge during their time in school, drawing on their experiences at primary school. At key stage 4, pupils choose from a variety of relevant subjects and are given effective advice and guidance about what options to select. The programme of careers education begins in Year 7 and involves regular opportunities to think about the future, including by receiving information, visiting local businesses and listening to guest speakers.

- Links with primary schools are effective. Transitions from primary school, and later into post-16 providers, are smoothly organised.
- Training for staff is effective. It is linked to individual, subject and whole-school priorities. The school receives good support for training from the MAT. Subject teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders benefit from well-organised and productive links with other MAT schools.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well. Additional funding for these pupils is spent well to provide effective teaching and care. The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is checked on regularly. Funding for disadvantaged pupils, and for those pupils in Year 7 who are behind in English and mathematics, is used and evaluated well. These pupils make good progress during their time at school.
- Most of the school site is well maintained. Many of the classrooms and other learning areas are well equipped and attractive. However, a few areas on the upper school site are dilapidated.

### **Governance of the school**

- The academy council is effective.
  - Academy council members have a suitable breadth of skills and experience. Regular and well-organised meetings, which are supported by useful management information, enable them to check on the school and hold senior leaders to account for its performance.
  - Many of the academy council members were involved in the amalgamation plans. They are strongly committed to, and passionate advocates for, a single school to serve the town of Rugeley. They recognise that the two predecessor schools, Fair Oak and Hagley Park, were too small to be sustainable. They have worked hard to secure sponsorship for the schools and have built productive relationships with the MAT.
  - Academy council members are trained well and understand their statutory roles, including in relation to safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is led very well. In challenging circumstances, caused by the amalgamation and a split site, senior leaders have ensured that pupils feel safe. Careful checks are made on external visitors. Both sites have a designated safeguarding lead. Staff and pupils know who to turn to if they have any concerns.
- Pupils in the school are cared for well. Bullying is only very occasional, and it is dealt with robustly. Pupils are taught about cyber bullying and how to avoid it. Supervision round the sites is plentiful. Any key risks to pupils are considered carefully and action is taken quickly whenever any issues arise. Any complaints are investigated thoroughly. Leaders in the school are eager to learn from experience. They are quick to act if they discover any issues, for example by tightening arrangements for checking on pupils and sixth formers when they enter and leave the different sites.

- Staff are trained regularly on relevant aspects of safeguarding, including current national issues. Staff are knowledgeable and individual support for pupils is tailored to reflect local needs.
- Systems used to record any incidents related to safeguarding are robust. Action is taken swiftly to support pupils in need and any incidents are followed through. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are known to staff and supported well, including through tailored and individual interventions. All arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose and records are sufficiently detailed and of high quality.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching is usually effective. It is built on the strong relationships that exist between pupils and staff. Teachers have good subject knowledge and often use this to inspire their pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of the work that pupils should do. Lessons are planned so that pupils work at a challenging level. Although the work set for pupils is ambitious, it is grounded in a firm understanding of what pupils already know. As a result, lessons build routinely on what pupils have learned previously. Where needed, pupils increasingly use 'fixit' time to revisit earlier learning.
- Most teachers think carefully about the activities that pupils should do. In the best lessons, work is tailored to the interests and needs of the individuals in the group. In some instances, for example when teaching information and communication technology to boys in Year 10, this is done remarkably well. Most lessons are taught by specialist teachers. Any non-specialists are given extra time to plan lessons.
- Teachers use questioning well to involve pupils in lessons. They target individual pupils very well, including disadvantaged pupils, and routinely ask follow-up questions. This encourages pupils to participate and provide thoughtful responses.
- Targets set for pupils' progress are challenging but achievable. Middle leaders and teachers check regularly on how well pupils are doing. Lessons are adjusted if an individual, or group of pupils, is falling behind. Nearly all teachers follow agreed guidelines for assessing individual pieces of work. However, not all teachers follow the agreed policy for homework.
- Most classrooms are attractive and well maintained. Pupils and teachers make good use of displays and checklists adorn many classroom walls. In a few instances, and on the upper school site in particular, the physical environment is less stimulating.
- Senior leaders recognise that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been affected by the use of temporary staff. These difficulties are largely historic, and leaders have worked hard to establish stable and more specialist staffing.
- More broadly, senior leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weakness in teaching across the school.
- New teachers, including those who qualified recently, are supported well. They are encouraged to reflect on their practice and, like other staff, benefit from well-organised and relevant training. Additional adults, particularly the higher-level teaching

assistants, provide good support in classrooms and intervention sessions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are cared for well. Effective pastoral support ensures that individual needs are met and that difficulties are speedily recognised and acted on. Most pupils thrive at school, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and they develop into considerate, hard-working and confident young people. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.
- Pupils benefit from an effective programme of assemblies and personal, social, citizenship and health education. They are given regular opportunities to consider what it means to grow up in Britain today, including by challenging cultural stereotypes. They are tolerant of each other and the differences that exist between them.
- Pupil council members, head girls and head boys at lower and upper sites, and 'school ambassadors' are active in promoting positive attitudes across the school. They provide senior leaders with a very useful perspective on what it is like to be a pupil at the school. Pupils write and edit a professional-looking newspaper, *The Hart of Rugeley*, which is read in school and more widely across the local community.
- Well-established links with local businesses provide opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work. Together with new celebration and awards evenings, this helps to raise aspirations and encourage industrious and resilient attitudes.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They usually bring the correct books and equipment to lessons. Most pupils take pride in their work.
- Pupils' conduct is polite and usually well-mannered. Nearly all respond eagerly when given instructions. They speak courteously to adults and observe agreed routines in classrooms. They usually move about the school without fuss and boisterous behaviour is uncommon. Their behaviour is orderly and supervised carefully at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved markedly in classrooms, with far fewer instances of lower-level disruption. Detailed records of behavioural incidents are kept and these also show that minor disruption has reduced significantly. Serious disruption is very rare. In very few instances, younger low-attaining pupils need to be reminded to listen more attentively. A few older pupils are occasionally late to lessons.
- Pupils' punctuality to school is good. Their levels of attendance are in line with the national average. The absence rate of disadvantaged pupils is low. It has fallen strikingly for these pupils as a result of targeted strategies to improve their attendance

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## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- GCSE results in 2016 showed that pupils made good progress from their starting points. This reflected an improving trend in pupil outcomes.
- GCSE results were weaker in 2017 because of changes to the cohort and the disruption caused by the amalgamation of Fair Oak and Hagley Park schools in September 2016. Since then, the school has worked hard to consolidate the significant improvements made to teaching and behaviour. This has led to rapid improvement in the progress made by pupils.
- Pupils attending the school currently make good progress in many subjects. However, serious gaps in their prior learning mean that many still work below the expected level in mathematics, English, science, humanities and languages.
- Middle leaders and teachers are working with energy and determination to fill these gaps. They are assessing pupils accurately and planning work that is helping pupils to overcome shortfalls in understanding and knowledge. While this has begun to make a notable difference, outcomes are not yet good enough for these pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well and make reasonable progress. Disadvantaged pupils do well and the difference between their results and those for all pupils is diminishing.
- Pupils' wider outcomes are generally good. They leave school as confident and hard-working learners. Aside from some weaknesses in English and mathematics, they are well placed to achieve success as they begin the next stage of education or training.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Good

- Sixth-form students are taught very well. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points and achieve well in A-level and Level 3 BTEC qualifications.
- Sixth formers are hard-working and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to develop their understanding in lessons and to try out new ideas. They value the support they receive from teachers who know the students very well. Attendance levels are generally high and punctuality is good.
- Subject teachers are knowledgeable and ensure that sixth formers develop a wide range of specialist subject knowledge, which draws on wide reading inside and outside of the subject. Teachers are passionate about their subject and transfer their knowledge to sixth formers with enthusiasm.
- Sixth-form tutors support their students very well. A good programme of personal and social development provides ample opportunities to explore and debate current issues. A sixth-form council provides a forum in which sixth formers can discuss the school and make suggestions for improvement. This complements the more formal learning done on A-level and BTEC courses, which are coherently organised and well matched to sixth-form students' interests and career aspirations. Sixth formers are very well supported in making applications to university and, increasingly, they gain places at Russell Group universities. They are given good advice and guidance before joining the sixth form and as they move into Year 13.

- Extra-curricular opportunities are varied and give sixth formers further opportunity to broaden their cultural, linguistic and social horizons. However, sixth formers are somewhat isolated from the younger pupils and make only a limited contribution to the wider life of the school.
- GCSE resit courses in English and mathematics are taught well and pass rates are generally good.
- Strong leadership in the sixth form has led to significant improvements in teaching and outcomes. The sixth form is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and student outcomes carefully. They have an accurate understanding of how well each sixth-form student is doing.

## School details

Unique reference number	137100
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10049031

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

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	1,135
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr A Murphy
Principal	Mr C Keen
Telephone number	01889 802440
Website	<a href="http://www.hartschool.org.uk/">www.hartschool.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@hartschool.org.uk">enquiries@hartschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	23–24 April 2013

## Information about this school

- The Hart School is an average-sized secondary school in the town of Rugeley. It was formed in September 2016 following the merger of Fair Oak and Hagley Park schools. The new school has retained the unique reference number and inspection history of Fair Oak School. It will move to a single site in September 2018.
- The academy is sponsored by the Creative Education Trust, whose mission is to promote the improvement of educational opportunity for young people in the UK and to enhance the role of design in schools. A chief executive and senior officers oversee the work of individual schools in the MAT. The academy council is accountable to MAT

trustees for the quality of their local governance.

- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for support from the pupil premium. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. A very small number of pupils attend short-term placements at three alternative providers, Nu Futures, The Bridge and Making Learning Work, for a few hours each week.
- Most of the pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of key stage 4.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning across the different subjects taught in the school.
- They spoke formally and informally with pupils from different year groups. They observed their conduct in lessons, around the corridors and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the quality of pupils' work in books and folders.
- They met with senior and middle leaders, academy council members, MAT officers and teachers. They met with other staff and spoke with a social worker from the local authority children's social services team.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of information provided by the school, including data about the progress of pupils and evidence about the quality of safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 74 responses to the staff questionnaire. They took account of the 105 responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire, including the 77 written comments.

## Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Lord	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Howes	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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