

Holgate Academy

Hillcrest Drive, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 6PX

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal and leadership team have been relentless in their efforts to improve provision. As a result, standards of teaching and the achievement of students are good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to ask questions to check students' understanding.
- Teachers are confident and generally have high expectations. They plan interesting activities that help students develop good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers know their students well and mostly give them work that is challenging enough to help them make good progress.
- Given their starting points, students are making good progress in both English and mathematics. Their performance in a range of subjects is improving on that of previous years.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs and the most able students are identified swiftly, and timely actions are taken to secure their good progress.
- Students behave well. They are polite, courteous and speak to visitors with confidence. They enjoy school, work hard in lessons, want to learn, and care for each other well.
- Students feel safe and secure in school. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe when using modern technology.
- The sixth form is good. It promotes good learning and achievement. Students are well informed of the routes available to them when leaving school.
- Governors monitor the work of the school very closely and hold the school to account for the progress pupils make very effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Aspirations of what students are capable of achieving are not always high enough.
- Support offered to students who join the school with weaker literacy and numeracy skills does not enable them to make sufficient progress to catch up with others.
- Teachers do not always ensure that students have the necessary literacy or numeracy skills to secure outstanding progress.
- Disadvantaged students do not consistently make the same good progress as their peers as they have not been sufficiently supported or challenged by work set in the past.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 36 lessons, of which nine were seen jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Inspectors visited an assembly and a number of tutorial sessions. The inspection team also made short visits to lessons during a number of walks through the school to look at students’ attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students and talked informally to students during breaks and at lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, and senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also spoke to members of the governing body and representatives from the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP).
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s evaluation of its own performance, plans for improvement, policies and records of students’ behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also scrutinised safeguarding documents.
- They considered 86 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and took the results of a school survey of approximately 126 completed questionnaires into account. Inspectors also noted the 48 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Robert Ridout, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jackie Pentlow | Additional Inspector |
| John Ubsdell | Additional Inspector |
| Salim Akhtar | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Holgate Academy is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. It converted to an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, known as The Holgate Comprehensive School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate.
- The vast majority of students at the school are from White British backgrounds. Virtually all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend alternative provision off-site at a range of providers including the Virtual School, the Inclusive Education Service and the Holgate College.
- The school enters a small number of students early for GCSE examinations.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school is a member of the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) and is affiliated with the Diverse Academies Trust. DALP is committed to development and improvement through collaboration and partnership. It includes Tuxford Academy (A National Support School and Teaching School), Retford Oaks Academy, East Leake Academy and the National Church of England Academy.
- The school has received support from DALP mathematics and English consultants.
- There have been significant changes to both the leadership and teaching teams since the school became an academy. A new Principal was appointed in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement for all students, but particularly for disadvantaged students, by making sure that:
 - all members of the school community raise their aspirations of what every student is capable of achieving
 - the work provided in all lessons is sufficiently challenging and students are well supported to make the progress of which they are capable
 - disadvantaged students and those joining the school with weak literacy and numeracy skills receive more effective support to help them catch up with others
 - students' skills in numeracy, reading and writing are developed fully in all subjects in all years.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers within the school are raising standards and are determined to improve further the quality of the teaching and the achievement of the students. The school's own records show that teaching has become increasingly effective during the current school year, particularly in the teaching of English, mathematics and science. However, the improvements in teaching have yet to be fully reflected in the attainment of all students.
- Teaching is much improved because leaders carry out rigorous checks on its quality. They use their strong coaching and mentoring skills to offer constructive advice and training to raise standards further. Best practices are shared between colleagues and are used in classrooms to improve the effectiveness of teaching.
- The effectiveness of teaching is reviewed regularly by senior leaders. Information from these reviews is used to decide any salary increases and to identify opportunities for promotion. Training is provided by the senior leadership team and through coaching involving subject leaders. This has improved the skills of the teaching staff. Weak and ineffective teaching has been eradicated.
- Subject leaders, including those in the sixth form, are clear about their roles in improving the quality of teaching and how they are raising standards. A small minority of subject leaders are new and still developing their confidence and skills to support their teams, particularly in relation to improving the quality of teaching.
- The school has drawn on support from its partner secondary school for specific expertise, for example, sharing staff to teach English and mathematics. High-quality staff training in science, modern foreign languages, history and geography has also been provided. The positive impact in all areas is evident in the good teaching and rapid progress of most students at the school.
- The progress students are making is checked at least termly. Senior and middle leaders scrutinise the attendance, behaviour and work of students to see if any are falling behind and need additional support. This is especially true of students following courses off-site. The school's work has been reviewed by outside bodies and within the Trust. Teachers' assessments have been validated.
- Students experience an appropriate range of subjects at all key stages. These ensure that students can pursue GCSE and sixth form courses best suited to their interests, aspirations and abilities. They receive good information, advice and guidance to help them make the right choices to succeed. A wealth of additional activities helps students to develop skills and extend their learning. Visits to the local university help raise their aspirations and ambitions to proceed to higher education.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through lessons, form time and trips. Staff make students aware of the importance of British values and ensure they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, inspectors observed an assembly exploring the Magna Carta and democracy as well as revisiting the school's core values of respect and tolerance.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used to full effect in the past to enable disadvantaged students to catch up with others. However, the funding is currently being used more effectively than before to provide one-to-one help, small-group tuition and additional in-class interventions to support eligible students.
- The school fosters good relations. It endeavours to promote equality of opportunity for all students. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form.
- Partnership work with the Diverse Academies Learning Trust brings benefits to all members of the group. Governors value the support and training they receive. Procedures have become increasingly more robust and accountability is strong. Leaders and teachers from schools within the collaboration share good practice and benefit from shared training. Standards are rising as a result.

- The school is working hard to establish good and better links with parents. Most are supportive of the school, and many believe the school cares for their children well.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are instrumental in setting the strategic direction for the school. They make a valid and valued contribution to improvement planning and self-evaluation. They work effectively with the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership to ensure a strong focus on outcomes for students informs decision making and that improvement priorities are acted upon quickly.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Information is used to provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They use a range of evidence, including test and examination results, to monitor how well faculties perform and to hold subject leaders to account.
 - The performance of staff, including that of the Principal, is managed rigorously. Salary increases are carefully considered and are awarded only when there is clear evidence to support them. Poor teaching is not tolerated.
 - Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent. They have rightly challenged leaders on the impact it has had in the past on eligible students and can demonstrate the positive outcomes it is securing now in most groups.
 - Governors' recruitment and training are well managed. As a result, governors bring a good range of skills and experience to strengthen the leadership of the school. They ensure financial probity and carry out their safeguarding duties with diligence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are very aware of the needs of others. This was seen as older students from the sixth form and other year groups helped younger pupils at the new intake day. The importance of British values, such as tolerance and respect, are taught and consistently reinforced by staff.
- Around the school, students are polite, friendly and courteous. They move sensibly around the building and follow the instructions of staff. They use good manners to each other and staff. Students wear their uniform neatly and keep the school very tidy.
- In lessons, students are keen to answer questions and want to succeed. Some have short concentration spans and occasionally lose interest in their work, but teachers and teaching assistants are quick to bring them back to the task in hand. Work in students' books is well presented and complete. This reflects the pride most take in their work.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that everyone understands the importance of regular attendance and its link with good progress. Attendance is now broadly average and rising. Exclusion rates are falling.
- Most parents believe the school makes sure its students are well behaved.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school is safe and secure despite the significant amount of ongoing building work being carried out to enhance the learning environment. Robust procedures are in place to check students attending off-site provision are safe and their behaviour is good.
- Students say they feel safe in school and know they can approach adults if they have a worry or concern. The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) indicate their children are happy and feel safe and the school looks after them well. These views were strongly confirmed by the results of the school's own surveys.

- Students also have a good understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including cyber-bullying. Good relationships are evident between students. They believe bullying is rare and are confident that any reported incident would be dealt with robustly by the school.
- Students have a very good understanding of the risks associated with using the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- The evidence secured from the school's own checks on teaching, its own assessment data and the quality of work in students' books all indicate that teaching has improved under the present leadership and is good. This has resulted in students' good attitudes towards learning and good progress for the vast majority.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are confident and use their knowledge to ask probing questions to check that students understand new learning. Teachers use students' answers to decide whether they need to explain again or whether they can challenge students further. This helps students to make good progress.
- Students are enthusiastic learners because teachers have strategies to make lessons enjoyable. Teachers are enthusiastic, and this inspires students to learn. They find ways of engaging students with their work and use interesting approaches to share new knowledge and consolidate previous learning.
- All adults manage students' behaviour effectively and supportively. They ensure students' needs and self-confidence are supported in a way that does not disrupt the calm atmosphere that is common in classes and underpins good learning.
- Teachers plan well to ensure that students are given work that is matched to their ability and that it is sufficiently difficult to enable them to make good progress. Teachers are generally aware of students' capabilities and previous learning. They use this information diligently in their planning of activities that provide students of all abilities with an equal opportunity to progress well.
- Learning is effective when teachers mark students' work with detailed and constructive comments. As a result, students know how well they have done and how they might improve further. Learning is enhanced when students are encouraged and made to respond to teachers' comments in books. Students find this helpful.
- Good training opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to develop their expertise have resulted in good teaching. Teachers new to the school take on established routines so the quality is largely the same from class to class. Better, more consistent teaching is improving students' progress.
- Teaching, supported by teaching assistants who have a significant and positive impact both in and out of classrooms, meets the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs well.
- Teachers are increasingly also meeting the needs of disadvantaged students well, so they now achieve more in line with other students than they did in the past. Nevertheless, expectations are not always high enough to secure consistently good outcomes for this group of learners.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with below average attainment in English and mathematics but leave with attainment that is broadly average.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, at

the end of Year 11 in 2014 was in line with the national average. Robust monitoring of progress and targeted support early in the year have ensured that students made good progress in a range of subjects from low starting points. School assessments moderated by external experts confirm the accuracy of teachers' judgements.

- Students currently in the school are making good progress in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. They are attaining standards at least in line with and often better than those expected for their age. This is supported by evidence in books which shows students are progressing well.
- A very small number of students attend courses away from the school's site. These courses are proving successful in ensuring students have a renewed interest in education. They succeed in securing skills and qualifications relevant to work that enable them to move on to further education, employment or training.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because careful checks are made of their work and timely additional help is provided both within lessons and in small groups. Teaching assistants are particularly effective as they challenge and support students without doing the work for them.
- The school enters a small number of students early for examinations at GCSE. This does not appear to adversely affect students' achievement.
- The most able students make good progress throughout the school because the work which is set for them encourages them to think deeply, discuss their learning and to produce good amounts of work.
- In Year 11 in 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and other students in the school and nationally was the equivalent of one full GCSE grade in English, but the equivalent of almost one and a half grades in mathematics. The rate of progress of these students was below that of others in the school and nationally both in English and mathematics.
- Information kept by the school shows that the disadvantaged students in the current Year 11 are making more rapid progress than before in both English and mathematics. The gap between their attainment and that of others in the school and nationally is expected to reduce to less than half a grade in both subjects. Disadvantaged students in the other year groups are also making good progress.
- A number of students join the school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 that are well below the expected levels for their age. The extra help these students receive through the Year 7 catch-up funding is assisting them to progress and improve these skills. However, the support offered does not enable them to make good progress and attain outcomes similar to their classmates.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students make good progress and achieve well. This is because teaching ensures that most students do as well as possible and make enough progress to fulfil their potential in their studies.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are effective in promoting high aspirations and self-esteem. This ensures students succeed. The relentless focus on improving standards of teaching in the classroom is ensuring that learning is planned with a clear purpose and is interesting. This is leading to rising achievement and attainment levels in most subjects and for most groups of students.
- The teaching is consistently good, including in English and science. It is outstanding in a few subjects, such as mathematics and art. Strong subject knowledge and effective questioning combined with inspiring approaches to lessons enable students to add to their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Staff endeavour to support students to gain both the confidence and skills to take additional responsibility for their own learning and so, at times, make exceptional progress.
- Students follow courses appropriate to their needs and abilities; this enables them to make good progress.

- Good careers advice, guidance and support enable students to make well-informed decisions about their future. This prepares them well for life after the sixth form. It ensures students move on successfully into higher education, further education, employment or apprenticeships when they leave school.

- The behaviour and safety of sixth form students are good. The school ensures students are always safe and secure. They attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. They act as good role models for younger students and play an increasing role in the wider life of the school supporting their peers on entry to the school. For example, sixth form students routinely provide mentoring support for younger students.

- Leaders accurately track students' progress. Information is used well to plan focused, effective support enabling students who are underachieving to catch up. Students are appreciative of how the school supports and guides them to successfully manage their learning to secure good outcomes.

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

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| Unique reference number | 139956 |
| Local authority | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 450310 |

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

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| Type of school | Academy sponsor led |
| School category | Community |
| 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 | 937 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 88 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kate Turner |
| Principal | Neil Holmes |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 0115 9632104 |
| Fax number | 0115 9681993 |
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