

The Hathaway Academy

Hathaway Road, Grays, RM17 5LL

Inspection dates 3–4 June 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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The principal, the interim head of academy and the executive principal provide strong leadership. They have raised aspirations among students and staff and this has led to improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Students learn in a caring, supportive environment where all are encouraged and helped to achieve their best. As a result, students have positive attitudes towards their learning, and achievement is improving.
- Students make good progress in relation to their well below average starting points.
- GCSE grades are improving. The gap between the academy and the national average is closing.
- The great majority of teachers know the students well and plan interesting work that helps them to make progress.
- Students' behaviour around the academy is good. They are proud of their academy and show respect to one another and adults.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students and parents agree.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The academy sponsor provides high-quality support and rigorous challenge to leaders. This is helping the academy to improve.
- The governing body provides strong leadership. Governors have a good understanding of the work within the academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of students who gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is below the national average.
- Teachers do not do enough to help students improve their reading and writing skills in the different subjects they study. This sometimes prevents them from getting the highest grades at GCSE.
- Although some marking is of high quality, students do not consistently get clear feedback on how they can improve their work. Teachers do not routinely check to make sure students act on their comments and advice.
- In some subjects, students are occasionally set work that is too easy for them. This is usually in lessons taken by temporary members of staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 27 lessons across all year groups. Seven observations were made jointly with senior leaders. The work in a sample of student's books was evaluated. Inspectors attended an assembly and a tutor period.
- The inspection team observed the behaviour of students in lessons, during lesson changeovers and at break and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with staff, governors, the interim head of academy, the executive principal and other academy leaders, including heads of subject; and with representatives of the academy sponsor, Academy Transformation Trust. Inspectors also held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with four groups of students of different ages and abilities. They also had a number of informal discussions with students around the academy at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and recent surveys of parental opinion conducted by the academy. They also took account of the 28 responses to staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including examination results and the academy's own records of students' progress. They scrutinised the academy's policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors examined records of students' attendance and behaviour, the academy's plans for improvement, and documents used by leaders to check the quality of the work of staff at the academy.

Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diane Khanna	Additional Inspector
Frederick Valletta	Additional Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hathaway Academy was established on 1 July 2013. It is sponsored by Academy Transformation Trust.
- The principal took up post in September 2013. He is currently away from the academy due to ill health. The academy is being led by the vice principal who has been promoted to interim head of academy supported by an executive principal appointed by the Academy Transformation Trust.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. However, there has been an increase in the number of students from Eastern Europe so that the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language, at around a quarter, is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. This funding is for students looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- Three students are educated at home and follow a programme of learning provided by Education Welfare Services.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at GCSE.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards so that more students gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - there are more opportunities for students of all ages to use and apply their reading and writing skills in the subjects they study
 - all teachers give students clear guidance on how to improve their work and check that all students have acted upon this advice
 - where classes are taught by temporary teachers, the work set is appropriately challenging.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders are improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement. They have created a very positive atmosphere in which all students behave well, are keen to learn and good teaching can flourish.
- In the first year of the academy, the principal provided very strong and focused leadership with very high aspirations for students' achievement. Governors, senior leaders, teachers and students all share his vision for the academy to 'inspire, aspire and achieve'. He gave them confidence that all were valued and by working together, all can reach their aspirations. Whilst the principal has been absent from the academy, the interim head of academy, supported by the executive principal, have maintained the vision and continued to drive the academy forward despite the pressures caused by considerable turbulence in staffing.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. There are very clear expectations for high quality teaching based on the '10 Principles Learning Charter' agreed by staff and students. Leaders are not prepared to accept weak teaching that does not adhere to these principles and take firm action where necessary to improve teaching. Senior leaders judge teaching using a range of information, including the impact of teaching on students' progress. This information is used to support individual teachers improve their practice, enabling students to make good progress. This robust monitoring is used to decide whether staff will receive a pay award. Those that fail to meet their targets are not rewarded.
- Leaders ensure that newly qualified and trainee teachers are well supported. They are encouraged to work with colleagues to observe good practice. Those spoken to during the inspection were full of praise for the support they had received.
- The academy's evaluation of its performance is accurate and identifies clearly what can be done to improve further. Plans for improvement are well organised, focus on the right areas and include measurable targets to gauge the success of actions.
- Leaders have established a robust system for tracking and monitoring students' progress at regular intervals. Senior and middle leaders analyse the information carefully to identify which students require additional support or challenge to reach the targets they have been set. Leaders target interventions carefully and quickly check that to see if they are working. As a result, all students, including disadvantaged students, are making better progress.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subject areas. They are regularly held to account by senior leaders for performance in their subjects. They appreciate the training they have received and say it has helped them carry out their role in checking the work in their subject more effectively.
- Leaders spend additional funds from the pupil premium appropriately. This includes spending on additional literacy and reading support programmes and progress leaders for each faculty who work to support the progress and well-being of students. The spending is closing the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others.
- The range of subjects and courses that the academy offers is broad and balanced and promotes students' academic achievement and personal development well. It is enriched by a wide range of sporting activities and other activities such as football, art club and the choir. Students get effective careers advice and guidance to help them make the right choices at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. All Year 11 students have at least one interview with a careers adviser and, as a result, since the academy has been open, all students moved to education or jobs with training.
- The small number of students following programmes at home provided by Education Welfare Services are regularly monitored on their progress.
- The academy does not tolerate discrimination and is committed to making sure that all students have an

equal chance to succeed.

- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the faculty structure which nurtures and celebrates the attributes of 'engagement', 'purpose' and 'self-worth'. In their faculties, students enjoy working together and raising funds for their chosen charity.
- A well planned programme of assemblies and provision in subjects such as religious education and personal, social and health education ensure that students learn about the different beliefs and lifestyles of others and the need to respect them. Students learned about democracy when they held their own election at the same time as the recent General Election. Students are encouraged to take leadership roles within the academy such as becoming a prefect or a member of the student leadership team. Together with the curriculum, these opportunities ensure that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The Academy Transformation Trust is providing effective support for leaders at all levels. The trust assigned one of their improvement directors to the post of executive principal and this has ensured that leadership is supported well during the absence of the principal. The Trust keeps a close eye on the performance of the academy through monthly 'Progress Board' meetings which receives regular reports on progress. The sponsor also provides regular opportunities for subject leaders to meet and share good practice. Governors benefit from regular training opportunities provided by the trust such as the annual governor conference.
- Leaders are building good relationships with parents. Parents' confidence in the academy is demonstrated by the increasing numbers of students who want to join Year 7.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective. Governors are ambitious for the academy to do well and are clear about its strengths and weaknesses. They know how the academy performs in relation to other schools nationally. The Chair and Vice-Chair of governors visit regularly and know the academy well.
 - Governors rigorously monitor the work within the academy and provide an effective challenge to academy leaders. They receive detailed information about the progress, attendance and behaviour of students in all year groups. They know which groups of students are in danger of not meeting their targets and ask for regular updates on the impact of actions to improve their progress. This enables them to ask searching questions on improvements made to teaching and learning.
 - Governors understand the value of good teaching in raising achievement and are well informed about the quality of teaching in the academy. They use this information to ensure that the management of teachers' performance is robust and only the best teaching is rewarded. Governors take robust action where underperformance is identified.
 - The governing body manages the finances of the academy well. They look closely at how additional government funding is spent and have a good overview of the impact this has on the achievement of disadvantaged students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They are courteous and respectful towards one another and adults and they treat the building with respect. Students of all ages mix and get on well together. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the academy.
- Students are proud of their academy. They particularly value the way the academy is organised as three faculties because they say that it makes them feel like they are part of a family where everyone knows them well. They enjoy the many opportunities they have to work with others, through for example, fundraising for their faculty charity or taking part in sports competitions.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They are prompt to lessons, bring the necessary equipment and settle down to work quickly. Relationships with adults are positive. Students work well together and listen to each other, taking turns to make contributions to discussions. When giving feedback to their classmates on their work, students make sensible and helpful comments to each other.

- In the vast majority of lessons, students are well behaved. Students told inspectors that behaviour in lessons has improved since the academy opened and teachers apply the code of behaviour consistently. Where the work in lessons is interesting and presents students with a challenge, they apply themselves especially well to their learning and remain focused. Occasionally, in lessons taken by temporary staff, some students find it difficult to concentrate fully because the teachers do not know them well and the work is not interesting.
- Students willingly take on extra responsibilities and are keen to voice their views about how learning can be improved in the academy. The 'Student Aspirations Team' worked closely with senior leaders to discuss and agree the vision for the academy and the logos and slogans for each of the three faculties. Other students take on roles such as prefects and membership the student council.
- The academy provides good support for students who can display challenging behaviour. Good links with external agencies, together with strong support from the Progress Leaders, result in clear, workable support plans that lead to improvements in behaviour. As a result, the number of exclusions has reduced sharply.
- Students enjoy coming to the academy. Attendance has risen and is now in line with the national average. The academy carefully monitors the attendance of all groups of students. It takes prompt action on the first day of absence and works closely with the Education Welfare Service. As a result, the number of students who are frequently absent has reduced.
- The students following a programme of home learning provided by Education Welfare Services have positive attitudes to their studies.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The academy ensures that all safeguarding procedures are in place and meet statutory requirements. All necessary checks are made on staff before appointment. Entry into the academy is secure and visitors are checked regularly.
- Students told inspectors they feel safe. Students are taught well how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of the risks associated with using social networks and the internet. They have good awareness of the different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and racist bullying, but say it is very rare. If it did happen, they are confident it would stop if they told an adult.
- The academy has appropriate procedures in place to check the progress and safety of the small number of students who are following a programme of home learning provided by Education Welfare Services.
- Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are kept safe and are well looked after.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is rapidly improving as a result of the uncompromising and relentless drive by leaders to ensure that teaching is at least good. The regular monitoring of the quality of learning within lessons means that good teaching is evident across most subjects taught in the academy. As a result of improvements in teaching, students are making better progress and standards are rising.
- There is a positive climate for learning within most classrooms. This is because there is a good relationship between staff and students. Teachers know their students well and are well informed about their prior learning, as a result, they plan activities that are relevant and of interest to them. Teachers work to improve students' confidence as learners. Inspectors saw many examples where students were confident to answer questions and contribute their ideas and opinions in front of their classmates.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to effectively question students and to plan interesting activities that are pitched at the right level for most students. In a drama lesson, for example, careful and probing questioning from the teacher led to good quality answers from the students which

helped them improve their understanding of the skills needed to perform on stage.

- Teachers are very effective at identifying students who are falling behind or who need extra challenge to meet their targets. A broad range of well planned, short-term additional interventions, especially in English and mathematics, help students in all year groups address misconceptions and improve their progress.
- Support for students who are at an early stage of learning English is good. Teachers and learning support assistants work closely together to plan support for these students and to encourage them to improve their vocabulary by talking about what they have learned.
- Improving student's literacy skills, especially reading, is a priority for the academy. Additional literacy classes help the weakest students catch up with their classmates but in some subjects such as science and the humanities, teachers do not do enough to encourage students to read widely, increase their subject vocabulary or write at length.
- Some teachers mark students' work regularly and provide high quality feedback about what they have achieved and what their next steps should be. However, this is inconsistent across the academy and students report that some teachers, especially those that are temporary members of staff, do not mark their work very often.
- In some subjects, such as science, teaching is less effective because some classes have been taught by several temporary teachers who do not know them well and set work that is too easy. This slows down progress. Leaders are taking effective action to mitigate the impact on students' progress by reorganising the classes so that all are taught by teachers with good subject knowledge.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that is well below that found nationally. Very few students enter the academy with above average attainment. At the end of 2014, the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was below average. The proportion of students gaining five A*-G grades at GCSE was above the national average.
- In 2014, results in mathematics were close to the national average and students made good progress from their different starting points. The proportion of students making expected progress and more than expected progress was above that found nationally. Academy data indicate that progress for the current Year 11 continues to improve.
- Results in English in 2014 were below the national average and the proportion of students making expected and more than expected progress was also below average. Current data indicate that progress for the current Year 11 has improved considerably and that results will rise to close to the national average. The work in students' books and the progress they made in lessons observed confirm that progress in English is now good.
- Achievement in a range of other subjects is improving. Inspectors saw evidence of this in lessons and when looking at students' work. Progress information provided by the academy indicates that students are on track to achieve much better results in subject such as geography and drama.
- The academy estimates that the current Year 11 are on track to achieve considerably better results in the summer of 2015. This judgement is based on students' performance in mock examinations, test throughout the year and moderated coursework. Students who are falling behind have received targeted support through extra revision programmes.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and other students both nationally and in the academy is narrowing. In 2014, disadvantaged students achieved, on average, a grade below other students nationally and their classmates in mathematics. In English, the attainment gap was just over half a grade below other students nationally and just under half a grade below their classmates. Leaders

have made changes to the additional support that students receive and this is having a positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged students. The gap in mathematics between disadvantaged students and others in the academy is currently just over half a grade and in English it is a third of a grade. The gap is also narrowing in all other year groups.

- Students who are disabled or have a special educational need receive targeted support. As a result, they make similar progress to other students in the academy.
- In 2014, the academy entered a small number of the most able students early for GCSE mathematics because they were ready for the examination. They all achieved the top A* or A grades and have gone on to extend their learning in the subject. The academy has entered a small number of students early for the examination this year.
- The small number of most-able students do well. They study three science subjects and a modern foreign language. They make good progress, gaining the higher grades in their GCSE subjects.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the extra help they receive to improve their vocabulary. Academy data indicate that two thirds of those in Year 11 are on track to gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.
- The students following courses provided by Education Welfare Services make good progress in their studies.

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	139578
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	449844

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	691
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Boyles
Principal	James Howarth
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01375 371361
Fax number	01375 282743
Email address	admin@hathawayacademy.attrust.org.uk

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