

Weobley High School

Burton Wood, Weobley, Hereford, HR4 8ST

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make at least expected progress and generally good or outstanding progress. The proportion who exceed expected progress in mathematics is consistently well above average.
- The proportion of students who achieve five or more A* to C is consistently above average and often well-above average.
- Students' achievement in GCSE grades A* to C has improved in 2013 especially in modern foreign languages and history.
- Teaching is good or outstanding in the large majority of lessons, and students show very positive attitudes to their learning. Students are taught well by a team of dedicated teachers who are fully committed to supporting their learning.
- The strong governing body holds leaders to account very well. Governors play an active part in supporting the school, know the school well and are clear about where and how it can continue to improve.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding and they flourish within a very caring and supportive environment. Students say they feel very safe in school and are happy.
- The quality of leadership and management from the headteacher and senior leaders is a strong point of the school. Together with the governing body they demonstrate a clear commitment and determination to drive the continued improvement of teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching requires improvement and is preventing pupils in some lessons from making stronger progress.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is not yet coherently delivered across the curriculum.
- The school does not have a fully developed marking policy that is implemented consistently by all teachers in all subjects. This means that pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons. Two were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the school’s leadership team, staff, members of the governing body, students and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at break and at lunchtimes. They also spoke formally to two groups of students.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and scrutinised a range of documents including the school’s own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students’ achievement, attendance and exclusions and the school’s record of their observations of teaching and pupils’ work.
- The inspectors looked at behaviour logs and the school’s safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors listened to students in Years 7 and 8 read on the first day of the inspection and listened to students read in lessons.
- The inspectors took account of 144 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 45 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Sean Thornton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Weobley High School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British and a very few students speak English as an additional language. There are a very few students from Traveller backgrounds.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional money allocated by the government for specific groups of students including looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is above average as is the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational need.
- No students attend any off-site provision.
- No students are entered for GCSE before Year 11.
- The school was appointed a National Support School in 2012.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school holds specialist status in language and communication.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share further the good and outstanding teaching practice in the school so that all teachers use inspirational strategies more frequently to deepen the learning and progress of all students.
- Ensure that all staff consistently provide high quality marking and written feedback in all subjects so that a dialogue exists between the teacher and pupil to enable them to make more progress.
- Develop the school's approach to delivering a coherent and consistent approach to literacy and numeracy across all subjects so that all students develop these skills further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most students make at least good progress to achieve above-average attainment levels. Students make very good progress in mathematics both in achieving and exceeding national levels. In 2012 80% of students achieved expected progress in GCSE mathematics which is well above the national average.
- Progress dipped in 2012 in English to just below the national average. 66% of students achieved expected progress in GCSE English.
- In 2012 there was a dip to 61% in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics which resulted in average achievement. In 2013 the attainment of the majority of Year 11 students with five or more GCSE grades A* to C was above average. A greater proportion of students achieved the higher A*A grades in 2013 than in 2012.
- Students, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, achieved results well above the national average in the EBacc in 2012 and 2013.
- Students who join the school at other than the usual times are carefully monitored and supported where necessary. School data show that their achievement is similar to that of their classmates.
- Students' performance in GCSE modern foreign languages fell dramatically in 2012 but in 2013 GCSE A* to C grades were significantly higher than national averages. This was because of a change in the number of languages studied by students and by implementing a more rigorous approach to raising standards in language teaching.
- In 2012 there was a significant gap in attainment between those students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding and other students. This was equivalent to two GCSE grades lower than their classmates in English and mathematics. However in 2013, as a result of very well targeted support, this gap has closed significantly with 73% of students achieving GCSE grade A* to C in mathematics and 44% achieving GCSE grade A* to C in English.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used purposefully to help students with reading ages well below their chronological age. Readers from Years 7 and 8 read with confidence and understanding and were keen to let the inspector know of their love of reading and how much the school had done to help them make good progress.
- The achievement of some groups of students, including those who are from traveller backgrounds and those from Service families, at GCSE 5 A* to C including English and mathematics is exceptionally good and well above national averages.
- In most of the lessons observed, students sustained their concentration effectively. They responded particularly well to varied activities that were carefully designed to build their knowledge and understanding step by step.

The quality of teaching is good

- The large majority of teaching observed by inspectors was good or better and a substantial amount was outstanding. In the small amount of teaching that requires improvement students were not always given enough time to find things out for themselves or think more deeply for themselves about what they are doing and how to solve problems.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and used very well to prompt students to think. Questioning is deployed very well to check and probe understanding and adjust learning during lessons to support good progress.
- Enthusiastic and confident teachers use their subject-specific vocabulary very effectively and expect their students to do the same. For example in a year 11 English lesson on developing students' understanding of perceptive inference, the teacher carefully ensured secure knowledge of key words before proceeding. Highly effective links were made with prior learning that could be applied to the new context. Students' responses were exemplary.
- Teaching makes a very positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in particular in supporting them in reflecting, working well together and listening carefully to others. All students are extremely well prepared for their future in education, training or employment.
- Teachers make imaginative use of students in the classroom to promote their self-confidence and independence and inspectors saw many examples of students managing their own learning successfully. In one Year 8 physical education lesson students made outstanding progress as a result of some dynamic teaching of rugby skills and highly effective group work.
- Teaching observed in many lessons was outstanding. Examples of these were seen in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, humanities, art, PE, drama and music where students made rapid progress and teaching was inspirational.
- Marking and assessment generally provide advice to students about improvements they should make. However, detailed marking that provides a dialogue between the teacher and the pupil in order to enable them to improve their work and make excellent progress is not yet consistently applied across the school by all staff in all subjects.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not consistently applied across all subjects.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs to make progress and develop as independent learners.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and students; there was a shared enjoyment of a climate for learning. Classroom management was of a very high standard including behaviour management and use of time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of the students is consistently outstanding, not only because they show courtesy and respect towards staff and peers in lessons and when moving around the school, but also because their attitude to learning is exemplary.
- Students show real enthusiasm for learning and are determined to do their best in lessons. They

are keen to ask the teacher questions both about the lesson and to extend their knowledge beyond the topic. Their curiosity and their excellent attitudes to learning demonstrate a lively and spontaneous need to learn.

- Students' enjoyment of school makes a significant contribution to the quality of behaviour shown. It also makes a significant contribution towards their spiritual, moral and social development, alongside developing their self-awareness and self-esteem.
- Students say they feel safe in school and they have a secure awareness of the different forms of bullying and report that incidents of bullying are rare and when they do occur they are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged very well through assemblies, tutor time and in class.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs socialise and study well with other students. This is a very positive aspect and emphasises the strength of the school community and the value placed on equality of opportunity.
- Students in need of a little extra help are very well cared for in the school's LINC centre (inclusion and support centre) which provides strong support and guidance for students who are vulnerable. There is an experienced and effective pastoral team who ensure that students feel safe and happy in school and find success in their studies.
- Parents responding to the online questionnaire are extremely positive about behaviour and safety in school.
- Attendance is above average due to the effective systems in place to monitor absence across the school and because students say they are happy and say they want to be in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The dedicated headteacher, supported by senior staff, has an uncompromising vision for the development of the school, for the benefit of its students. This vision is widely shared by all staff who are highly motivated in continuing to implement improvements within the school. The responses to the staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive and showed strength in the shared vision.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate in its identification of the school's strengths and areas for development. The impact of actions to improve teaching and learning is monitored effectively.
- Teaching and learning is managed well and clearly linked to performance management.
- Performance management is robust and fully integrated with the schools priorities, salary progression and the professional development of staff. Good use is made of the Teachers' Standards to identify strengths in teaching clearly and these are shared through professional development sessions. Any aspects in need of development are pursued to secure improvement.
- The curriculum has been successfully developed to meet the needs of all learners, particularly in Key Stage 4 and for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. There are valuable opportunities for extended learning, such as enrichment days when there is a focus on particular activities and experiences. There are a huge variety of clubs, trips, teams,

competitions, and performances for students to get involved in.

- The school's LINC centre offers an innovative approach to supporting students with a range of particular learning and behavioural needs with its specialist staff providing outstanding support for all who need it. Students take a tremendous pride in their achievements and the centre has had a substantial impact on the attendance, attitudes and achievement of its students.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and according to the parent responses on Parent View, a very high majority would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school was appointed as a National Support School and has an excellent range of partnerships with other establishments including Hereford Leading Edge Partnership and the West Midlands sustaining excellence network.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well embedded into the curriculum and is a particular strength of the school.
- The local authority provides a 'soft touch' support for the school and is aware of the current performance of the school and what it needs to do to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body takes an active and very successful role in the life of the school. Governors know clearly how well the school is doing, not just in terms of the examination successes of the students but across all the separate areas within which the students play an active part, for example, the achievement of students in extra-curricular activities, visits abroad and links with the local community.
- A series of well-planned meetings for both full and sub-groups of governors help them to maintain a robust but balanced overview of the effectiveness of the school.
- The governors and senior managers, have a strong mutual respect for what each is doing to help the school improve. The governors find the quality of the head teacher's reports particularly helpful for them in identifying emerging issues and in deciding how best they can help the school to address these.
- Formal governing body meetings are used to help monitor progress in all areas, including the school's use of the pupil premium and performance management. Governors are provided with clear information about the overall performance of those students in receipt of the pupil premium, including a breakdown of performance for each of the separate groups.
- The governors have a very good understanding of how well teachers are doing in terms of the progress that their students make. This helps the governors to accurately assess teachers' performance against the pay they receive.

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	116952
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	429544

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Edwards
Headteacher	Dean Williams
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2011
Telephone number	01544 318159
Fax number	
Email address	admin@weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk

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