

Nailsea School

Mizzymead Road, Nailsea, Bristol, BS48 2HN

Inspection dates 18-19 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	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.

- Governors and leaders at all levels are very ambitious for the success of the school. They work tirelessly and continue to improve the quality of education students receive.
- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the school has improved significantly in recent years so teaching and achievement are good.
- Teaching is good and improving. Teachers create a positive climate for learning where students feel valued and supported. Lessons are carefully planned and made interesting, so that students learn well.
- Students make good progress across a range of subjects including English and mathematics.
- Effective systems have improved the behaviour and safety of students and these are good. As a result, students attend regularly and attitudes to learning are good and improving.
- The school promotes equal opportunities very well. As a result, disabled students, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged students now make good progress.
- The curriculum is well designed to match the needs of students. A wide range of opportunities enables students to acquire the skills, values and aspirations to succeed in the next stage of their education.
- The sixth form provision is good. Students follow suitable courses, make good progress and are being well prepared for their future choices.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Non-specialist teachers do not always have the skills and detailed subject knowledge to ensure that students make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always provide enough challenge to enable all students to make the quickest progress and achieve the highest grades.
- Marking feedback is not always effective in moving students forward.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, students’ learning and behaviour in 38 lessons, 10 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed assemblies, breaks and lunchtimes.
- Students’ work was scrutinised in their books in lessons. A separate work scrutiny of students’ work was carried out across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Meetings were held with groups of students.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors.
- A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the 114 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the 57 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors analysed a variety of information about students’ progress, attendance and behaviour.
- They looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation and development plans and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspection team looked at the school’s safeguarding policies and at its records relating to the safeguarding of students.

Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Simon Packer	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Taylor	Additional Inspector
Teresa Gilpin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nailsea School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Nailsea School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, also called Nailsea School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Over 90% of the students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is about 13%, which is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- There are currently a small number of students who attend Weston College and Bridgewater College to complete work-related courses in motor vehicles, maintenance operations, health and social care and equine studies.
- In 2014, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding and maximise the progress made by all students by:
 - making sure that tasks ensure the highest level of challenge at all times
 - ensuring that marking feedback to students is always understood and effective at allowing them to improve their work
 - making sure that non-specialist teachers are supported to teach to a high standard.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has brought about significant improvements in the school's culture and ethos. He has succeeded in raising the expectations and ambition of students, staff and parents and carers. He has focused strongly on improving the quality of teaching and improving behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher is supported by a strong team of senior leaders and, following a restructuring process, an increasingly strong team of middle leaders. Middle leaders are increasingly improving their impact by closely monitoring teaching quality in their subject areas and by sharing the very best practice.
- Leadership of teaching is strong. Leaders systematically check the quality of teaching across the school. They use these checks to reach accurate judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and to decide appropriate plans for further improvement. The school's judgements about teaching are accurate and moderated by visits from external consultants.
- Effective levels of professional support ensure the quality of teaching is continuing to improve further and enables students to make good progress. Teaching is not outstanding because there remain some weaknesses in teaching that mean students do not always make the quickest progress, in particular not enough attention is given to supporting non-specialist teachers to develop their skills and subject knowledge to the highest levels. Leaders recognise this and their plans are being implemented to address these areas for improvement and are improving teaching quality.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. The headteacher has ensured that among the range of improvements that were needed in the school when he took over, the most urgent priorities were pursued, with strong success. The track record of current leaders offers clear evidence of good capacity for continued improvement.
- Rigorous and highly effective procedures are in place to monitor students' performance in relation to the progress they make, their attendance and their behaviour. When underperformance is identified, prompt and effective support is put in place to bring about improvement.
- The performance of individual teachers is checked against Teachers' Standards, which are national expectations for the performance of teachers, and targets related to the progress students make. Targets are linked clearly to teachers' progress up the salary scale with the most experienced staff making additional contributions to the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have reviewed the range of subjects offered so that students now pursue high-quality academic courses that are matched to their needs and enable them to achieve well. There are well-thought-out policies to ensure all students have the opportunity to improve their literacy skills.
- The needs of students who attend off-site provision are well met and their progress, attendance and behaviour are monitored effectively. There is excellent focus on transition arrangements at each stage and good provision is made for students in the sixth form.
- The school's commitment to develop the employability skills, aspirations and values of its students is strong. Partnerships with businesses, the community and universities provide students with a range of opportunities that give them a good understanding of choices about their next steps. Careers education is a well-planned, integral part of the curriculum. As a result, the school has significantly reduced the number of students at the end of Key Stage 4 who do not continue in education or some form of training.
- There is a very strong focus on promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations for all and tackling discrimination. This is particularly evident in the way the school supports disabled students and those who have special educational needs and in the success it has had in narrowing gaps in the achievement of all groups of students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through the curriculum and in the wider life of the school. It is fostered through a range of visits, and by strong provision in house sports and through community-based activities. Assemblies and religious education lessons give many opportunities for students to reflect on cultural diversity, the importance of tolerance, respect and the rule of law. As a result, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Very good use is made of pupil premium funding. As a result, gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and other students are narrowing rapidly.
- Although an academy, the school maintains effective links with the local authority which provides relevant professional development opportunities and experience when called upon. The school is in the process of putting in place an improvement partner to ensure an external view of the school's progress.
- Leadership in the sixth form is good and increasing numbers of students are benefiting from good opportunities to study at top universities.

- Parents are regularly informed of the progress children make and kept up to date regarding improvements in the school. Attendance at parental events is increasing as a result of effective strategies to engage parents with the school's work.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students are effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is strong. Governors provide a very strong mix of skills and experience. They fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school from performance data. Governors know about the quality of teaching and understand the need for challenging targets for teachers in order to improve students' achievement. They are fully informed about the new performance management approach and how this rewards good performance by teachers. The governors are also aware of how any underperformance is challenged. Governors know how well pupil premium funding is being used and what impact it is having on the achievement of disadvantaged students. They actively develop positive links with parents and the local community. Governors challenge the headteacher and senior leaders and, like them, are absolutely committed to providing the best education possible and improving the lives of students at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They are polite, welcoming, wear their uniform with pride and conduct themselves well during break periods and as they move between lessons. Punctuality is good at the start of the day and students arrive promptly to lessons and are ready to learn. They treat the school site with respect; there is very little litter or graffiti.
- Students typically listen carefully to their teachers, with whom they have good relationships, and are quick to follow instructions.
- On rare occasions, some students are not fully focused in lessons. This is where teaching is not challenging and where teachers do not use consistently the school's behaviour system.
- The school's use of temporary exclusion has declined considerably over time, as leaders' high expectations for behaviour have become firmly established. During the inspection, students spoke of the positive changes in behaviour since the headteacher arrived. There are few incidences of serious misbehaviour. Students are motivated by the recognition and rewards that they receive for behaving well, working hard and making a positive difference to the school community.
- Many students help to promote the well-being, personal development or learning of others. Students develop their leadership skills, and make a positive contribution to the school community through their work in a variety of roles. The school and house councils are valued by the students for the impact they have in making improvements.
- Students in the sixth form make a very positive contribution to the school's culture and ethos. Their work within the school council and within students' leadership roles supports the school's continued improvement well.
- The school's monitoring indicates that the small number of students who attend off-site provision attend and behave well, and are kept safe.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students have a good understanding of how to stay safe and know how to minimise risks, including those involved in using the internet and social networking sites. The curriculum provides guidance on how to stay physically safe and how to manage stress and stay emotionally healthy.
- The school's monitoring information indicates that behaviour of a bullying or racist nature is rare; students confirm this and are confident that any incidents that do occur are tackled quickly so that they are not sustained. The use of homophobic or otherwise unacceptable language is extremely rare; none was heard during this inspection and school records confirm this is usually the case.
- Students feel, and are, safe, secure and valued. Governors are trained in 'safer recruitment' procedures and have established ways of establishing the suitability of those who visit, volunteer in, or work at the school.
- The school's leaders work effectively with other agencies and ensure that vulnerable students are well supported. They follow up cases of persistent or unexpected absence carefully, robustly and with impact; rates of persistent absence are falling and overall rates of attendance continue to rise.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching is good and enables most students to make good or better progress in learning.
- During lessons, teachers regularly check students' understanding. When students do not fully understand or are struggling, teachers provide extra guidance and support or change their approach so that students learn more effectively. Students usually learn well because they are engaged and involved in their learning.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly. In the best examples, marking and feedback have a good impact on progress because students are given clear direction on what they need to do to improve and are given time to act on this. For example, in English, students make rapid progress because they purposefully use the guidance from their teachers to help them improve their work. Although more teachers are adopting this good practice, it is not consistent across the school and, as a result, feedback does not always help students to improve as much as it could.
- Good relationships, built on trust, respect and high expectations, are an important characteristic of teaching in the school. The vast majority of students are keen to learn and get on well with their work.
- In a small proportion of lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, learning is less successful due to teachers' lack of subject knowledge and it is on these occasions that a small minority of students can lose concentration.
- Occasionally students are not always challenged sufficiently and are given the same work as others or not moved on to more difficult activities soon enough. As a result, these students do not always make fast enough progress.
- There is evidence that many students read widely and a range of initiatives for all year groups is in place to encourage this and to support their improved literacy skills. Students are given good opportunities to develop their communication and mathematical skills in their lessons. Students express themselves orally well and are given good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in a range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants are skilled. Their thorough understanding of the needs of the students in their care enables them to offer effective support to ensure students are fully involved in lessons and make good progress.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Students begin Year 7 with broadly average standards. The vast majority make good rates of progress, so that the proportion attaining five or more good GCSE grades is above average. The school's information and work in students' books indicate that students currently in the school are maintaining the school's high standards.
- The proportions of students making expected progress in English are now above national expectations. Increasingly, students show confidence in expressing orally their opinions and ideas, benefiting from the many opportunities to share their thoughts with their peers.
- The proportions of students making expected progress in mathematics are above national expectations. Students show increasing confidence, in many lessons, to calculate mentally, and interpret information from a variety of charts and graphs
- The proportions of students making more-than-expected progress in English and mathematics were both above national averages in 2014.
- The most able students also achieve well and overall progress is good in many subjects despite occasionally not being sufficiently challenged by their work.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Their needs are met and they are supported well in lessons and in small groups by adults who understand precisely the specific skills that require further development.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students is improving significantly and gaps are rapidly closing between students currently in the school. In 2014, the proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress was less than their peers and other students nationally. In 2013 and 2014 disadvantaged students in the school were working at nearly two grades behind their peers and other students nationally in both English and mathematics. This picture has rapidly improved with the small proportion of disadvantaged students currently in the school now set to achieve more closely in line with their peers in school. Disadvantaged students taking examinations this year are currently working at half a grade behind their peers in English and mathematics.
- The small minority of students who are educated off the school's site achieve well and they gain

qualifications that meet their needs.

- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders are effective in creating a sixth form culture that is characterised by high aspirations and a strong sense of community. Parents are kept fully informed about life in the sixth form in general, and also about the progress of their children.
- The behaviour and safety of students in the sixth form are both good. Students are very keen to learn, and display good attitudes to learning, particularly in their approaches to supervised study where students are given the opportunity to develop their own understanding of topics and carry out their own research. They make a positive contribution to the ethos of the school and are used widely as role models for other students. For example, sixth form students make regular contributions to the Friday lunchtime musical performances which are open to all students to enjoy.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Students identified teaching as the strength of the sixth form. Teachers have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the examination specifications and utilise this well, maintaining students' motivation and stimulating their interest.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is good. Attainment in most subjects is above the national average.
- The majority of students who start Year 12 successfully complete Year 13. Students are well supported in their applications to top universities.
- As a result of good teaching and the broader experiences to which they are exposed, students are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Students value the additional support they are given to pursue career interests.
- Students take part in a range of experiences other than examination courses, including extra-curricular opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and with the Youth Trust.

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	138466
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	461962

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,009
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally-Ann Hancock
Headteacher	Chris Wade
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01275 852251
Fax number	01275 854512
Email address	nailsch@nailseaschool.com

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