

# Poole Grammar School

Gravel Hill, Poole, BH17 9JU

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- All students make outstanding progress in a wide range of subjects. These include English and mathematics. Their GCSE, AS and A level results are high.
- The very small proportion of students entitled to additional funding, such as those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, also make outstanding progress.
- Students develop a wide range of literacy, numeracy and other skills. They use these widely in lessons so that they make outstanding progress in all years.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all students. They help students to have high levels of self-confidence and to be enthusiastic about learning.
- Teachers gauge the quality of students' work well and set appropriate academic targets.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They work hard and concentrate very well in lessons.
- Students are very well cared for and feel extremely safe in school.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Outstanding teaching and learning is reflected in above national AS level results and rapidly improving A level results.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It promotes and sustains students' academic achievement. It generates students' curiosity and intellectual endeavour.
- The school encourages excellence beyond the classroom. It provides an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits from outside speakers and overseas students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. They mature into considerate, thoughtful young adults who are keen to contribute to society.
- The headteacher's, governors' and other senior leaders' leadership is outstanding. They provide the successful drive and ambition to keep improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed an assembly and tutor periods.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school’s work.
- The lead inspector met with a number of governors, including the vice chair and chairs of the teaching and learning and finance committees of the Governing Body. She held a conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation document, school improvement plan, data about progress, standards, additional funding, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ work in lessons.
- Inspectors took into account 166 responses to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire and three letters from parents.
- The inspection team considered questionnaires completed by 62 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Jackie Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Mallone	Additional Inspector
Claire Plumb	Additional Inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional Inspector
Ann Sydney	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Poole Grammar School converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school is a larger than average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. It is a selective boys' grammar school which attracts students from a wide range of feeder schools.
- In the sixth form, some subjects are taught jointly with girls from the nearby girls' grammar school.
- The school has specialisms in mathematics, computing and cognition.
- The proportion of students from an ethnic minority background or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- A very small, and well below average, proportion of students is eligible for the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for specific groups, including looked after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The most common needs relate to the ~~autistic spectrum disorder~~ specific learning difficulties.
- No students are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding as all students enter the school with at least Level 4 in English and mathematics.
- Two students attend off-site provision to support their medical needs or their sporting excellence. This provision includes Southampton Football Academy and the Quay School.
- The headteacher was appointed this academic year, having previously been the senior deputy headteacher at the school.
- The further mathematics centre for Dorset is based at the school.
- The school has been awarded the Prince of Wales' Feathers for school leadership, English and History; and the Food for Life Partnership gold award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

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

- Share best practice in marking across the school so that all students in all subjects know how to improve their learning and respond appropriately to the comments made by their teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students join the school with above average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 11 the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is considerably above the national average. This is as a result of outstanding teaching.
- Many of the examination results students achieve are very high. In 2013, 100% of students achieved A\* to C grades in mathematics, French, German and drama. Over 90% of students achieved A\*-C grades in additional and core science, biology, chemistry, art and design, food technology, resistant materials, English language, English literature, geography, history, music and religious studies.
- The very small group of students from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with all students. In 2013 GCSE examinations, they achieved above the national averages.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve above the national averages at GCSE, AS and A level. They achieve as well as their peers.
- The school makes good use of the funding for the small minority of students supported by additional funding. The attainment gap between these students and others in the school is closing rapidly, especially in English and mathematics. In 2013, the gap in English GCSE reduced to half a grade and in mathematics to a quarter of a grade. Their rates of progress were similar to those of all students in the school and higher than those for similar students nationally.
- Students arrive at the school with high levels of literacy and numeracy, which contributes to their outstanding achievement. They read widely and know, particularly in the sixth form, that they are expected to carry out research and go beyond basic examination requirements.
- Very few students enter the school with slightly lower levels of literacy. A very effective programme has been put in place to ensure that their progress is accelerated. This ensures they do very well in GCSE, AS and A level examinations.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Attainment is well above national averages. The school enables high attaining students to make better than average progress at AS level and at least average progress at A level.
- A level progress is improving rapidly as the result of successful actions taken by the school. Students eligible for free school meals or who are looked after achieve in line with other students at A level and outperform other students at AS level.
- The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all its students and monitors the progress of groups of students carefully. Where teachers spot students at risk of not meeting their targets, additional support is provided through the mentoring programme. This is led by members of the senior and middle leadership teams. One student commented that the support they had received 'has made a huge difference to my English level'.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The excellent relationship between students and their teachers lies at the heart of the school's success. Students respond very well to teachers' high expectations. As a result, students make outstanding progress.
- Teachers use their outstanding subject knowledge to plan challenging and well-resourced lessons. In a Year 9 geography lesson, students carried out an investigation into microclimates around the school and discussed any surprising findings. Health and safety was properly assessed by students and their teacher before undertaking the practical activity using climate measuring equipment.
- Students have confidence in the staff and feel extremely well supported by their teachers. Year 9 students stated that they felt very comfortable asking for advice from individual teachers, especially when making their choice of subjects for GCSE.

- Learning was particularly effective when students participated actively in lessons. In a Year 8 religious studies lesson, students discussed, in groups, case studies that deeply probed their understanding of justice and injustice.
- Literacy and numeracy are continually developed by all teachers. Teachers provide students with an excellent reading list prior to their starting AS level courses. There is an excellent literacy programme. This includes regular reading periods in the school's library and visits by, for example, a poet, all help to develop students' reading and writing skills. Numeracy links are made to specific subjects such as physics. In addition, students and their parents are provided with topics to work through at home linked to the MyMaths program.
- Teachers provide students with regular, helpful and detailed comments on their work so they have a clear awareness of what it is they need to do to improve. However, the quality of these comments is too variable, as is the expectation that students should reflect and act upon them.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs are extremely well supported by the special needs staff. Teachers adapt their teaching well to ensure that they are included in learning activities, for example by adapting questioning. Consequently, these students are able to share their ideas with other students in the class.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers challenge and engage students through a wide variety of activities and astute questioning. In a Year 12 English lesson, students maturely compared themes such as poverty and wealth in two novels, *The Great Gatsby* and *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, and this led to an enthusiastic and animated discussion about the politics of capitalism and fascism.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding in class and around the school. In lessons, regardless of the subject or year group, students show a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge. This is a major factor contributing to their outstanding achievement.
- Students work hard, are enthusiastic and keen to do really well and achieve highly. They commented very favourably about lessons where their thinking was challenged. For example, in religious studies, they had to contribute to debates on the morality of buying cheap clothing or deciding who should be thrown out of a train in order to save the group.
- Students conduct themselves thoughtfully and politely around the school. They move very sensibly around the site, allowing others to pass on stairways or in corridors, holding doors open for each other and staff. This is modelled by staff throughout the school.
- They socialise very well together at break and lunchtime, acting with politeness and restraint. Visiting overseas students were fully integrated into social groups during social time and in lessons.
- Students have numerous opportunities to develop their leadership through becoming prefects, senior prefects and language leaders working with local primary and special schools. They also support younger students within the school as part of the subject ambassador programme. The great majority of students progress to further and higher education.
- Students are extremely polite and considerate towards visitors and are very willing to engage in conversation.
- There is no litter around the school. Students were seen to voluntarily pick up stray pieces of paper during an outdoor learning activity. The school's facilities are well respected.
- Attendance is in line with the national averages. The school monitors any student where attendance could be a concern and takes action swiftly to support them and their families.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel totally safe in the school and the curriculum supports them very well in learning how to stay safe. They have a very clear understanding of e-safety.
- There are very few fixed term exclusions. The school has been proactive in addressing any in-school variation so that the very small number of fixed-term exclusions continues to decrease. There have been no permanent exclusions since the school became an academy.

- Students report that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and firmly. The numbers of bullying incidents are very small. There is very little racist or homophobic bullying and students report that it would not be tolerated in the school. The school has worked highly effectively with Stonewall to create this positive view.
- Students are very confident that there are adults as well as older students they can talk to about any concerns if they wish.
- The very large number of respondents to Parent View consider that behaviour is well managed, that their children are happy at school and that they feel safe. The respondents to the staff questionnaire were of the same opinions.

## **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders have an uncompromising and highly successful drive to improve the already high levels of academic achievement. Leaders at all levels create a culture of high expectations and ambition. Students enter the school with above average levels of attainment, and are set aspirational targets that are challenging, but achievable.
- The school's leaders evaluate its effectiveness robustly and, as a result, it is highly accurate. Consequently the school sets clear targets for improvement.
- The management of teaching and its impact on learning is extremely effective. The school's judgements on the quality of teaching are precise. This is because senior and middle leaders rigorously and regularly carry out monitoring procedures.
- The provision of training for all staff is very effective. Staff work in groups, so sharing and improving their practice, which has contributed to students' outstanding achievement. Leaders from the school support other schools to improve their mathematics teaching as part of the local teaching alliance. The school is the base for the development of teaching further mathematics within the county.
- The school has been awarded the Prince of Wales' Feathers for its excellent work in developing school leadership as part of the Prince of Wales' Teaching Institute.
- The system of performance management is well organised and relates fully to the national 'Teachers' Standards'. Salary progression only occurs when merited by good performance.
- The courses that students take are broad and balanced, providing an excellent mix of academic and work-related subjects. Students have outstanding opportunities to engage in a wide variety of activities outside the classroom. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, as well as exchanges with schools in Sweden, Namibia and South Africa.
- The leadership of the school ensures that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. The leadership actively involved Stonewall to support their work in preventing any form of extremism. The school very effectively uses additional funding to support students' participation in activities provided by the school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. It is fostered by citizenship, personal development, assemblies and tutor periods. Students eagerly embrace the opportunities to work with pupils in local primary and special schools.
- The school works very closely with parents through consultation evenings and involvement in pastoral matters where appropriate.
- The school works extremely effectively with the local authority on specific projects such as improving teaching in mathematics. Their partnership with the local girls' grammar school has expanded the curriculum offer available to students and is seen as a model that should be developed throughout the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body gives very strong leadership to the school. It makes sure that all safeguarding and child protection policies are met and that all appropriate policies are in place. It has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve.
  - Governors manage the school's finances very well, including the additional funding. They

check that the money is spent wisely and contributes to individual students' success. They speak confidently about the quality of teaching and how this has led to students' outstanding achievement.

- Governors are very ambitious for the school. They show a detailed understanding of students' achievement and how it compares with all schools nationally. They are fully aware of where improvements could be made to further improve the school's performance. Governors are fully involved in the performance management arrangements of all staff. They know what the school is doing to reward good performance and know the arrangements in place to tackle underperformance should it ever occur.
- Governors critically review their own performance and act to improve their knowledge and understanding of their role through actively engaging in training.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136850
<b>Local authority</b>	Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	429975

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1187
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	317
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Ken Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Baker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202692132
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