

# The Lord Silkin School

District Centre, Stirchley, Telford, TF3 1FA

**Inspection dates** 26–27 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The majority of students make good progress and learn well in many subjects.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades in GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has steadily improved and is now just below average.
- Students, whose reading and numeracy skills are poor when they start in Year 7, catch up quickly and achieve demanding targets.
- Teaching is good across the school and some is outstanding. All staff have high expectations of students and encourage them to be successful.
- The school sets high expectations of behaviour and, consequently, students behave well and exclusions are rare.
- Students feel safe and are confident that bullying is dealt with swiftly.
- Attendance has improved and students enjoy coming to school.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and is well supported by a strong team of leaders and managers. Effective monitoring and performance management have had a positive impact on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, opportunities are missed for students to develop independent learning skills.
- Students' attainment in English and mathematics, although beginning to improve, is not yet in line with the national average.
- Although, the governing body has demonstrated good capacity for promoting improvements, there has been insufficient time for their strategies to have a significant impact.

## Information about this inspection

- The team observed 25 lessons, many of which were joint observations with the school’s senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out additional shorter visits to lessons and held meetings with staff, students, parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher of the partner school and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the school’s plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans, the school’s monitoring information, school policies and governing body documentation.
- Seven Parent View responses were looked at together with the results from the school’s most recent survey from parents and carers.

## Inspection team

Michelle Parker, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Derek Wiles

Additional inspector

Patrick Walsh

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is over twice the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above average. The school admits a small number of physically disabled students from across the borough.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is higher than average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus and students who have a statement of special needs are well-above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- A high proportion of students join the school between Year 7 and the end of Year 11.
- The school is a member of the Cooperative Trust and is partnered with Wood Green Academy.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise students' attainment, especially in English and mathematics, and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - giving students greater opportunity to make choices and decisions in their work
  - ensuring that in all lessons the tasks provide sufficient interest and challenge to engage and stretch all students
  - giving students more opportunities to become more resilient in their learning.
- Improve the monitoring of students across subjects to ensure strong consolidation of students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Ensure that the recent strategies implemented by the governing body have an impact on raising students' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are rising. The attainment gap is closing rapidly for all groups of students, including disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those who are being supported by pupil premium funding.
- The achievement of students who are supported on school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is good. The achievement of those students known to be eligible for pupil premium is also rising because their attendance has greatly improved. Gaps in their learning in literacy and numeracy are identified and addressed through effective interventions; for example one-to-one coaching. Students who have physical disabilities achieve well and benefit from carefully tailored support and interventions.
- Students enter school with standards, particularly in English and mathematics, which are well-below average. The carefully tailored support packages and interventions, combined with good teaching, ensure that all students are improving their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- However, students' attainment, including in English and mathematics, is still not in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 4.
- All students make at least good progress and some make outstanding progress. This is because teachers take careful account of students' prior learning and build upon this successfully. They quickly identify gaps in learning and systematically address them.
- The school has a comprehensive and wide selection of additional support and interventions. These begin at the end of Year 6 when students have an 'induction' into school which enables them to make a good start in Year 7. Students identified as underachieving receive additional support, for example one-to-one coaching, holiday sessions and after-school booster groups. In science all students are able to access additional help from staff and use computers every night after school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Inspection evidence supports parents' and carers' views that students make good progress and are taught well. Students commented on how much they enjoyed learning.
- All teachers have high expectations of students and, as a result, learning is fast paced and engages students well. Higher attaining students benefit from this and, consequently, students are increasingly successful in achieving higher grades at GCSE.
- In some lessons opportunities are missed to encourage students' independent learning. In these lessons opportunities to tackle more open-ended tasks which develop deeper understanding of the subject are limited.
- In the majority of lessons, the tasks provide sufficient interest and challenge to engage and stretch all students. However, this is inconsistent.
- In Key Stage 4 lessons, good use is made of examination board information to help students

understand how to improve their work. Students are beginning to develop more resilience in learning but need more opportunities to practise this skill.

- Questioning in lessons has improved and teachers use this information effectively to adapt students' learning. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, the teacher constantly checked students' understanding and changed the lesson so that the gaps in measuring electrical current could be effectively addressed. This promoted quick gains in understanding.
- Work in exercise books indicated the consistent use of the school's marking policy. Students understand how to improve their work. The most effective marking allowed students to promptly address weaknesses. The school has identified that poor spelling is a problem and all staff correct spellings. Students are encouraged to learn these spellings.
- Teaching assistants and academic coaches work effectively in whole classes, with small groups and in one-to-one sessions to ensure students understand the work and make good progress. Well thought through additional support, such as the 'ARC' and nurture groups, helps students with more complex learning needs make good gains in their understanding and knowledge.
- The school provides a wide range of popular extra-curricular experiences to widen students' cultural awareness and to support, engage and enhance their learning. For example, theatre groups come into school to perform to and work with students.

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

- There is a positive ethos in the school and, consequently, students behave well and understand what is expected of them. The occasional instances of poor behaviour are managed well. As a result, the school has almost no exclusions.
- The school has a wide range of interventions aimed at keeping students in school and learning, while addressing poor behaviour. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of some students, but inspection evidence supported the view that these were rare occurrences.
- Parents support the view that the school is highly inclusive and particularly effective in supporting the educational and emotional needs of their children.
- Relationships between students and also between students and staff are good. There is no discrimination. Students of all backgrounds feel cared for. They appreciate that staff want them to achieve their potential and want them to play a full part in their learning. Currently, Year 8 students are being trained to take part in lesson observations.
- Students are polite, courteous, considerate and welcoming to visitors. Doors are held open and students move around the school sensibly, especially mindful of others.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that all students feel safe on the site and students agreed with this. Rare instances of bullying of any form are dealt with promptly. Students have access to a wide range of staff, including a full-time nurse, when they require additional support and someone to talk to. Parents' views concurred with this.
- Students who are young carers are quickly identified by the school and additional support provided on an individual basis. This has helped to improve their progress in school.

- Students understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, the school uses the drama curriculum, in particular, to encourage students to think about relationships and team working and develop inter-personal skills and other skills useful in the workplace. The school is very responsive to students' needs and this is reflected in the curriculum and during tutor activities.
- Attendance, which has for a long time been significantly below the national average, has improved and is average. This is because the school has taken a firm line on absence and has its own full-time educational welfare officer who assiduously follows up every absence and knows families well.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. He is ably supported by his senior leadership team who between them have changed the ethos of the school.
- Since the previous inspection the acting headteacher has been confirmed in post. He has been able to build effectively on the school's strengths and continue the drive for improvement. The focus on staff understanding data has enabled teachers to effectively plan for the different starting points of students.
- Rigorous tracking systems enable the swift identification of underachievement and carefully tailored interventions are monitored. For example, the school's focus on improving the literacy of all students has improved their confidence as readers and writers. However, the monitoring of students across subjects has not yet ensured strong consolidation of students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- The headteacher has not shirked in holding staff to account for the quality of teaching and learning and to these ends performance management systems are rigorous and set clear targets for improving teaching.
- The professional development of staff reflects both the school's own monitoring, performance management targets and the school improvement plan. This has enabled staff to access high-quality support from its partner school and to identify and share its own best practice effectively. This has resulted in weaker departments quickly improving and encouraging staff collaboration. The partner school has also benefited from the exchange of expertise.
- The curriculum is constantly reviewed as the needs of each cohort are evaluated. This has enabled the school to be flexible in meeting the needs of students. For example, the introduction of applied and triple science has increased the opportunities for challenge and independent learning for higher attaining students. The curriculum provides well organised opportunities for all groups of students. For example, it has improved the engagement of those students most at risk of exclusion through the introduction of more vocational courses and extended work placements.
- The school is very aware of the limited cultural opportunities and the need for high-quality spiritual, social and moral education. As a result, it provides rich experiences integrated across all subjects. The impact of this is seen in students' self-reflection and maturity.
- The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and has been effectively supported through the work of the partner headteacher. In addition, the local authority has helped the school to moderate its views to ensure they are based on a secure understanding of all its data. Parents and carers strongly endorsed the school's view of its work and are confident that their children are

receiving high quality education.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is effective because the new Chair of the Governing Body works enthusiastically to ensure that all governors are trained and clear about their roles; new sub-committees have been established and look in detail at all aspects of the school's work
- has greater rigour because, while still in its early days, it is now beginning to monitor individual students' progress and challenge senior leaders.

## 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>	123582
<b>Local authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	402180

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	583
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Trevor Goddard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2010
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