

Ellowes Hall Sports College

Stickley Lane, Lower Gornal, Dudley, DY3 2JH

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- Rapid improvements have been made because of the very high ambition and drive of the headteacher and all involved with the school. Students, staff and parents are extremely proud to be associated with the school.
- Results for Year 11 students have improved significantly year on year, particularly in English and mathematics, and are well above average.
- All groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, make outstanding progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Strengths include teachers' planning, subject knowledge and high expectations.
- Students' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes help them learn well. Students feel very safe in school and are not concerned about any form of bullying.
- There are very strong systems in place to check that students are making rapid progress. Any students not making fast enough progress get help very quickly so that they catch up.
- The range of subjects and courses are continuously adjusted to meet the needs and interests of the students. The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- The governing body works very effectively with the school and offers high levels of challenge and support.
- The small sixth form is good, and examination results are rising quickly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 43 parts of lessons, of which four were joint observations carried out with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, performance data, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and they looked at samples of students' work. The schools' central record of checks on staff was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of 32 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views of staff, including those expressed in 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nigel Boyd, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Ceri Morgan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Phillips

Additional Inspector

Tracey Louise France

Additional Inspector

Alan Giles

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ellowes Hall Sports College is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is slightly below that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce slight variations in the outcomes across different subjects in the sixth form by following the existing best practice.
- Further develop the sharing of best practice throughout the school to increase the amount of outstanding teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students arrive at the school from their primary schools with levels close to the national average and gain GCSE results much higher than the national average. Results have improved rapidly in recent years and the school has the accolade of being in the top 100 most improved nationally for the last four years.
- Students make rapid progress in lessons and this has been sustained over time. This can be seen in the data, which show that the proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics is much higher than seen nationally.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, all make similar progress to other students. This is as a result of carefully organised support to meet their needs.
- Literacy is very well developed in the school. Students are provided with opportunities across different subjects to develop their literacy skills and are encouraged to read widely. For example, normal lessons are suspended on a regular basis to enable 'ERIC' (everybody reading in class). Such initiatives, alongside very effective teaching, help to ensure that students make much better than expected progress in English. There are similar plans to further develop numeracy across other subjects but these are not yet fully implemented.
- Pupil premium funding is used creatively to ensure that students on free school meals are very well supported and make progress similar to their peers. The funding has been used to provide individual help to achieve examination success and to support their participation in out-of-school activities.
- The school's sixth form is very small. By the end of the sixth form, results are at least in-line with the national average for most subjects. Results are typically stronger in English, mathematics and some vocational subjects. Expectations of what students understand and can do when starting the sixth form have been raised. Also, the range of subjects and qualifications has been changed and is better matched to students' needs. As a result, students' progress is now good and improving strongly.
- The policy of entering students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics is carefully considered. Only students that may not get a C grade in their GCSE, and might benefit from the opportunity to re-sit their examination at a later date, are entered early.
- Parents and carers who expressed a view are overwhelmingly positive about the progress their children are making at the school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding. This was confirmed by observations made during the inspection, the school's records of observations they have made and from the views of students, parents and carers.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully. Lessons are interesting and capture students' enthusiasm well. Teachers have high expectations of their students. This encourages them to achieve and progress well. Outstanding teaching is supported by teachers' strong subject knowledge which

helps set the work at the right level.

- Students are very clear about what they are aiming for in terms of grades and levels. The progress towards their targets is very closely monitored by senior leaders, teachers and students. If students fall behind, rapid support is given to ensure they get back on track.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants, which enables them to make progress across all subjects.
- Teachers provide regular homework which complements learning in lessons well. Students value homework and say it provides a positive contribution to their learning and progress.
- Occasionally, some teaching is over-directed and teachers talk for too long. This has the impact of reducing the progress of students; as they spend too long listening to the teacher when they are ready to tackle the challenges set.
- Most teachers provide frequent constructive feedback to students both verbally and in the marking of their work. Teachers mark students' work regularly and accurately. Many teachers also give students helpful comments about their strengths and weaknesses so that they know what to do to improve their work. In a few cases, teachers' comments are too general to be helpful.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. At all times during the inspection, their behaviour in lessons and around the school was calm, considerate and courteous.
- Students take pride in their work and in their school. Students are keen to take on responsibilities and are given a range of opportunities to do so.
- Students are confident that they are safe in school. They are helped by the school to be fully aware of the different types of bullying. Students report that bullying rarely occurs and, if it does, is dealt with extremely effectively.
- Expectations about behaviour are high and applied consistently by staff. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively. Incidents of exclusions are rare.
- The school is a very harmonious community and this is largely because of the excellent relationships that exist between staff and students.
- Students' attendance is checked closely and absence followed up quickly. Attendance figures are in line with the national average and improving. Persistent absence figures are low. Inspectors noted that students arrive punctually for lessons and settle to learning quickly.
- Parents and carers agree that students are well behaved in school and that their children are kept safe.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the school. They have secured and maintained high levels of achievement and personal development. There is strong capacity to sustain future improvement.
 - Leaders' have an accurate view of the school's strengths and future priorities.
 - The headteacher has ensured that all staff have shared his commitment to doing the very best for every student.
 - Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. Inspectors carried out a number of joint observations with members of the senior leadership team and agreed with all of the senior leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Senior and middle leaders have taken part in training in assessing the quality of teaching and learning, which has helped to ensure they make accurate judgements.
 - There is a very close link between teachers' performance, pay awards and well-planned support and professional development opportunities. The management of targets for teachers is closely linked to the school priorities and student achievement.
 - Teachers talk enthusiastically about their membership of the 'learning and teaching group' in which they explore specific topics, share best practice and deliver training sessions which helps improve teaching across the school. Other opportunities for sharing the outstanding practice in the school are not fully exploited.
 - The range of subjects on offer is a strong feature of the school and plays a major part in helping students to achieve outstanding outcomes. Vocational subjects ensure the aspirations and career possibilities of all students are being met. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted in lessons and by special events such as opportunities for students to find out more and develop their understanding of the world.
 - As a successful school the local authority support is appropriately minimal.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well because they visit regularly to monitor the school's work. The governing body is involved in the school development and improvement planning and help to set ambitious targets for the school and the headteacher. They hold leaders to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. Governors receive regular and comprehensive information from the headteacher and request that heads of subject areas attend meetings where they are challenged to explain the achievement students are making. Governors ensure that resources are well managed and additional funding, such as the pupil premium funding, are targeted at the right students and used effectively to raise their achievement.
-

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	103871
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	402929

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation School
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	1104
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoffrey Marsh
Headteacher	Andrew Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2008
Telephone number	01384 686600
Fax number	01384 686599
Email address	info@ellowes.dudley.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

