

Lordswood Boys' School

Hagley Road, Birmingham, B17 8BJ

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough students make consistently good progress, across the year groups, in English, mathematics and science.
- A very small minority of students disrupt the learning of others and themselves.
- Senior and middle managers, including the governing body, have not secured students' consistently good achievement.
- There is not enough good teaching to make sure students make good progress because tasks are not set at the right level for different groups of students, including those eligible for the additional funding to boost their achievement.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement. While there are small numbers of students studying at the sixth form, their achievement is too variable in the subjects they study.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher provides good leadership. She has implemented systems and procedures sharply focused on raising achievement. However, it is too early to measure the full impact on these initiatives.
- The school has created a better place in which to learn, despite the condition of the buildings.
- There is united commitment from dedicated leaders and staff to ensuring that students achieve as well as they can.
- Students feel safe and enjoy the strong sporting enrichment activities.
- The majority of students behave well and are polite and friendly to visitors, staff and each other.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 33 lessons, observing 32 teachers. Eleven lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The team also conducted a series of brief observations of learning in classrooms and around the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the three responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's analysis of its own questionnaire completed by parents and carers.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of students' behaviour, the tracking of students' progress and examples of students' work. They looked at the school's attendance figures and monitoring information.

Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Phipps

Additional Inspector

Susan Thomas

Additional Inspector

Joseph Skivington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary boys' school. Most students are from a minority ethnic heritage background. The largest groups of students are from Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean heritages. Approximately half of the students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government, is above average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is above average but average for those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Some students experience behaviour, emotional and social and/or moderate learning difficulties.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Significant numbers of students join and leave the school at different times.
- A very small number of students are educated in alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher has been in post since September 2012 and is also the headteacher for Lordswood Girls' School. The sixth form is part of a local consortium of schools.
- The school is soon to convert to an academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - developing teachers' use of the information the school collects about students' progress to more effectively plan and deliver activities to meet the needs of all learners
 - ensuring that the checking of students' work is regular, detailed and timely, so that students know their next steps in learning and can respond to the feedback
 - ensuring that all lessons are interesting and stimulating for students so that they are engaged, behave well and enjoy their learning
 - taking every opportunity to develop students' literacy skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Raise achievement for all learners through:
 - reducing the variations in students' attainment between different subjects to at least in line with that found nationally or better
 - increasing the proportion of students making consistently good progress in English, mathematics and science across the school
 - improving the achievement of students in sixth form so that it is at least similar to that found nationally.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of middle leaders in consistently and rigorously monitoring, tracking and implementing effective strategies to improve the performance of students
 - ensuring that senior leaders systematically hold middle leaders to account for the achievement of students and the quality of teaching and learning in their departments.
 - ensuring that the governing body continuously evaluates the school's work and challenges leaders so that students make good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Achievement is not yet good because examination results are not as high as they should be across all subjects, especially for the lower and higher attaining students. There are now signs of improvement and the gaps are beginning to close.
- Students enter the school with attainment levels that are below the national average. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A* to C continues to rise. In 2010 and 2011, attainment remained below average. In 2011, there was significant underachievement in the progress across different groups of learners. The school has entered some students early for examinations with some success in mathematics. Some students are educated off site and their achievement is similar to that of other students in the school.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics has improved. As a result, in 2012, results rose sharply to be broadly average. There are some variations in the performance of students in different subjects, and this is recognised by the school. Achievement is not as strong in design and technology, German, core science, geography and business studies as it is other subjects.
- Students' achievement is getting faster as a result of better teaching but this has yet to impact on students' attainment in all subjects over time. The school recognises that there are still too large gaps between the strongest and weakest performance of different groups of learners, but the gaps are beginning to narrow across a range of subjects. Current indications are that the Year 11 students are on track to maintain the improvement in results seen in 2012.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. These students are now receiving better support to help them overcome difficulties that hinder their learning. In the past, the progress of students from Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean heritage backgrounds has not been fast enough. These students now make better progress and gaps between groups are closing.
- The achievement of those students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is also uneven. The gaps in their performance are closing because the money has been used to increase specialist English and mathematics teaching. Students who speak English as an additional language and those students who join the school at other times than the normal entry point achieve similar to their peers because of additional and specifically targeted teaching.
- Achievement in the sixth form is not as good as it should be. However, currently the number of student is very small and comparisons with national data have to be made with caution. In 2011, students' A-level achievement was good but this sharply declined in 2012. The school has reviewed the subjects it offers and through more robust monitoring of teaching and learning, students' achievement is beginning to rise.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching over time has not led to good achievement across all subjects. Teaching is improving and a greater proportion is good or better than was previously the case. However, this is yet to be consistent enough to improve students' achievement in all subjects.
 - There remains too much teaching that requires improvement or which is, occasionally,
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inadequate. In these weaker lessons, planning does not cater for stretching the higher or lower attainers as teachers do not make sufficient use of the information they have about what students know and can do. On occasions, students of different abilities undertake the same activities. Students' literacy skills are not well enough developed across the curriculum. They are not given sufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills in a range of subjects.

- There is an increasing proportion of good teaching. The key characteristics of good or better teaching seen during the inspection include:
 - strong relationships between teachers and students
 - teachers having high expectations and creating a 'can do' attitude
 - well-planned lessons that meet the needs of most learners, enabling them to learn well
 - effective questioning that is utilised to enable students to think and respond
 - teaching assistants effectively deployed to support disabled students and those with special education needs.
- Outstanding teaching was observed in a Year 10 art lesson. The strengths included:
 - activities that were personalised to each individual, enabling them to be creative
 - high quality opportunities for students to lead, collaborate and support each other's learning
 - activities that were fun and accelerated students' learning
 - passion and engagement, leading to students making exceptional progress
 - excellent use of assessment.
- The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent across the school and within departments. Verbal feedback given to students is considerably stronger than the written feedback. The best practice is seen in English where frequent and detailed accurate checks on students' work provide them with detailed guidance on how to improve their work. This has aided the better progress made last year, especially for the last year's examination results. This practice is not consistent across the school, where some books are not marked frequently or in sufficient detail.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- A very small minority of students occasionally interrupt the learning of others and there are inconsistencies in the ways in which teachers deal with these students. Most students behave well. Those interviewed by inspectors stated that behaviour in lessons is dependent on the quality of teaching. On a few occasions, the behaviour of students when moving around the school is noisy and loud.
 - In lessons where behaviour was good or better, teachers kept explanations short and precise, giving students a range of activities, so that they were active in their learning. However, a few lessons where behaviour was not good enough, this was a consequence of either the teacher talking for too long or activities that did not stimulate students' interest. As a result, students became passive in their learning and exhibited low level disruption, such as constant chatting or fidgeting. On occasions, the students arrive late to lessons.
 - Exclusions have previously been high. The school has implemented a range of systems to better manage behaviour. As a result, exclusions have dropped. Despite some variations in attendance in last academic year, students' attendance continues to improve and is broadly in line with the national average.
 - Students feel safe and demonstrate a sound understanding of how to avoid placing themselves
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at risk in a variety of settings. They have a clear understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They report that when bullying occurs, it is dealt with appropriately. The sixth form students demonstrate pride and high levels of respect.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management have strengthened, but are not good because actions taken by leaders at all levels, including governance, have not led to consistently good teaching resulting in good achievement over time. Improvements more recently in reducing exclusions, raising attendance and promoting better teaching demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve.
 - The school's self-evaluation is highly accurate and sharply focused on specific areas for improvement. There are clear measures of success and realistic timescales. In the past, the management of teaching has focused too much on evaluating teaching rather than students' learning and their achievements. With more robust monitoring and tracking systems in place, including the management of performance, leaders are beginning to drive improvements in achievement. The latest programme of professional development of teachers is more targeted specifically to improving the learning of individuals.
 - The effectiveness of middle leaders is too variable and requires improvement. Some middle leaders sharply focus on monitoring and holding staff to account, but this is inconsistent. The quality of leadership is reflected in the students' achievements. There is not enough detail in some of the departmental development plans to rapidly raise achievement. Senior leaders have previously varied their approaches in holding middle leaders to account. It is now more consistent and methodical.
 - The curriculum did not previously match the interests of the students and this contributed to inconsistent achievement of students in the past. Improvements have resulted in more interesting opportunities for students that better match the needs of the individuals. The enrichment programme is strong, in particular sports. The Combined Cadet Force is a major part of the school, providing opportunities for leadership, discipline, team skills.
 - Partnerships are a key strength of the school. The collaborative partnerships between the girls' and boys' schools are improving teaching and leadership by sharing best practice. The sixth form consortium arrangements enable students to study a wider selection of courses. There are increasingly productive links with parents and carers.
 - The local authority has provided support in the area of behaviour management. There are good links with different agencies in improving the school's work in supporting students' specific needs.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive and provides some challenge to the school. Governors receive adequate training and they are, collectively, aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Previously, its members have relied too much on the school to provide information and they have lacked a sharp focus on students' achievement. The governing body's involvement in checking the performance of different groups of learners in subjects is in the early stages of development. All safeguarding requirements are in place and meet statutory requirements. Governors have an adequate understanding of the quality of teaching and the link between teachers' pay and their performance. The governing body
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has supported the school in using pupil premium funding to increase staffing and resources, and some gaps between the groups are beginning to close. However, they recognise that further monitoring of these and other groups are required in order to improve achievement and drive up attainment.

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	103484
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400621

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	607
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Brownsword
Headteacher	Jane Gotschel (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
Telephone number	0121 464 2837
Fax number	0121 464 2746
Email address	enquiry@lb-sch.co.uk

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