

# The Friary School

Eastern Avenue, Lichfield, WS13 7EW

**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Teaching is not consistently good. This means that too many pupils do not do as well as they should in their GCSEs. Achievement has not improved quickly enough since the previous inspection.
- Teachers do not always insist on hard work and good behaviour. In some lessons, especially where less-able pupils are taught, low-level disruption occurs too often and this limits the time spent on learning.
- The work set by teachers does not always stretch more-able pupils. This means that they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Recent efforts to improve reading and writing have not yet raised achievement in all subjects. Pupils are not receiving consistent advice about how to improve their work.
- Leaders and managers have not made enough use of the good practice that already exists to improve the teaching of others.
- Governors are well informed about the school's work. However, they do not consistently challenge the school to raise its expectations of pupils and staff.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school's specialism allows many pupils to achieve highly in sport, music, drama and dance. This helps develop their confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers know their subjects well. This means that they are well placed to help pupils learn. Some teaching is already good and a small amount is outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are helped to achieve their best.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils is good. The additional government funding is being used well to help them to make better progress.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing is good.
- The sixth form is good. Students do well in their examinations and many go on to university.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons as well as observing areas around the school at break and lunch time.
- Inspectors also looked at examples of pupils’ work and case studies. The quality of marking and written feedback was noted.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, three governors, including the chairs of two sub-committees and three staff governors, senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), one phone call from a parent, and 54 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, the school’s own data on students’ current progress, monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

John Mallone, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Moodie	Additional Inspector
Balbir Kaur-Pierpoint	Additional Inspector
Raye Alison-Smith	Additional Inspector
Michael Marks	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Friary is a larger-than-average community school.
- It was awarded specialist status as an arts and sports school in 2006.
- Most pupils are White British. The number of pupils from a minority ethnic background is small and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The school has very few pupils who receive alternative education, but uses the services of the local authority at The Bridge Short Stay School and Staffordshire Further Education College.
- The senior leadership team has two new assistant headteachers appointed since the previous inspection.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
  - setting work at the right level for all pupils, especially the most able
  - improving reading, writing, speaking and listening by providing more opportunities to develop these skills in all subjects
  - increasing pupils' engagement and improving behaviour for learning in lower sets
  - giving pupils clear guidance through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve their work, and ensuring that they have the opportunity to make those improvements.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - extending the use of existing good practice to help others to improve their teaching
  - providing training to help teachers improve behaviour for learning, especially in the lower sets
  - training teachers to mark to a consistently high standard in Years 7, 8 and 9 and to check one another's marking.

## Inspection judgements

### ■ The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils join the school in Year 7 with broadly average attainment and achieve broadly average GCSE results in Year 11. In 2012, the proportion of pupils gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics fell, especially in English, but remained broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils achieving five A\* to G grades at GCSE has been above average in each of the last three years.
- The reduction in A\* to C grades in English was partly due to the number of middle-ability students, mainly boys, failing to obtain a C grade in the examination. There is evidence that teaching has improved in English and more pupils are now making good or better progress than at the same point last year.
- GCSE examination results in mathematics remain broadly average, although pupils made less progress than is typically expected. In some lessons, progress is rapid where teaching is well matched to pupils' individual needs. However, in some other lessons, the pace is too slow or all pupils are expected to do the same tasks in the same time, regardless of their ability.
- Although attainment at GCSE remains average overall, performance varies between different subjects. The school has accurately identified subjects where achievement is weaker and is taking steps to improve pupils' progress and the standards they reach. Pupils achieve well in modern foreign languages at GCSE.
- In 2012 pupils achieved better results than nationally in the English Baccalaureate subjects, especially in science.
- Students join the sixth form with broadly average attainment. They make good progress at AS and A level, with those taking media studies and physics making particularly good progress.
- In 2012 students did well in English, further mathematics, media studies and sociology at AS level and in physics and general studies at A level. Attainment in geography at AS level and religious studies at A level was below average in 2012.
- The gap in attainment between pupils receiving pupil premium and others has narrowed from 2011 to 2012. In English and mathematics, these pupils were on average a grade behind their classmates in 2011. By 2012, this gap had narrowed to half a grade in English but only slightly in mathematics. There is evidence that this gap is continuing to close as a result of one-to-one specialist teaching and revision sessions in both subjects.
- In Year 7, the catch-up funding for pupils who did not reach the nationally expected level in their Year 6 tests has been used to support weaker readers. They are reading more often than they were and are now better at recognising letters and the sounds they make, although they still have difficulties with some combinations of letters and in breaking down words to sound them out.
- The school provides extra support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They make good progress because their work is broken down into sufficiently small steps, with further targets identified and reviewed regularly. Those with more complex learning difficulties are supported effectively so that they make the progress of which they are capable.

- In 2012, no pupils were entered early for GCSE examinations, but this policy has been reviewed. Some students have been entered early in Year 11 for mathematics. In English, students were entered early for one part of the examination in 2013; this has given them useful experience and helped them to understand the standard of work required.
- The small numbers of students who study courses with an alternative provider achieve well and their progress is closely monitored. Hardly any students are not in education, employment or training when they leave Year 11. This is due to the guidance that they receive and the appropriate courses that they study.
- The quality of the artwork on display around the school is high. Students have numerous and frequent opportunities to engage in musical and dramatic performances: a recent production of *Grease*, involved more than 300 students, including 270 on-stage actors, singers and dancers as well as the back stage crew of lighting and sound engineers, wardrobe and props managers. Several students have gone on to places in drama schools and a Year 11 group is currently bidding to set up a company to take performances into the community. The school's emphasis on sport provides challenge and opportunity to the extent that students of both sexes have represented not only Staffordshire but the national team in several sports.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teachers do not always set work that is hard enough or stretches pupils to achieve as much as they can. Some teachers expect all pupils to complete tasks in the same length of time, taking no account of individual differences. When teachers do not plan lessons with individual pupils' targets and current achievement in mind, more-able pupils, in particular, do not make enough progress. In the sixth form, work is more closely tailored to individual needs and students make good progress.
- Some teachers do not use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding. This means that some pupils do not know how to proceed to the next task. This sometimes results in low-level disruption.
- Some teachers find it difficult to manage the low-level disruption which occurs when pupils lose concentration. As a result, valuable learning time is lost and pupils make less progress than they should.
- The quality of marking varies greatly between subjects and teachers. The best marking clearly identifies what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve. In some cases, marking is not done on a regular basis. The quality of marking is particularly variable in Years 7 to 9.
- The school has correctly identified that levels of reading, writing, speaking and listening need to improve across all subjects and it has begun to address this. There are initiatives aimed at improving spelling and reading: all teachers must mark work for spelling; there is a 'word of the week' which all pupils are encouraged to use; and subject teachers have been asked to include more opportunities for reading in their lessons. The school is planning a training day for all teachers on improving reading and achieving higher standards of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Where teaching is good, teachers move learning forward at a fast pace and use a variety of activities to engage pupils' interest and plan work that matches individuals' needs and abilities. Teachers' strong subject knowledge helps to create lessons which pupils enjoy, and their calm

approach to behaviour management means that pupils remain on task.

- In the smaller groups found in the sixth form, teachers know their students well and tailor work much better to their individual needs and abilities. Strong subject knowledge, coupled with clear advice and guidance on how to improve, mean that students make better progress than in the main school.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Behaviour around the school is generally good, but when there is a lower level of supervision at lunchtime and break, pupils show noticeably less respect towards one another.
- In some lessons, low-level disruption takes place when pupils are not engaged by the work. This starts a downward spiral which leads to less focus on learning and slower progress over time.
- More vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. They socialise and study with other pupils.
- Bullying is uncommon, incidents of racist and homophobic bullying are rare and the school deals with these effectively. Pupils know how to identify bullying and where to turn for support when it occurs. The school has recently gained the e-safety award, in recognition of its work to protect pupils when they are online and to give them ways of dealing with cyber-bullying.
- The number of exclusions is low and has recently fallen significantly as a result of the close monitoring and support of pupils whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion.
- Attendance is in line with similar schools overall and has improved in each of the last three years. There is very little persistent absence.
- The school's specialism in arts and sports means that pupils are able to explore social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues in lessons and after-school activities and through links with the local and wider community.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The school's systems for analysing and monitoring pupils' progress are robust. However, not enough is done to ensure that teachers plan and deliver lessons that are matched to pupils' different abilities and which bring about faster progress.
- Leaders have not identified that low-level disruption is a concern to many pupils, particularly in lower sets, and that it is affecting their chances of making good progress. Because this has not been identified as a priority, leaders have not organised training and support for teachers in better managing behaviour.
- Although marking, particularly the marking of spelling, has been the subject of a whole-school focus, the monitoring of marking by senior and department leaders has not increased the consistency of marking. This is because there has been insufficient follow-up of the shortcomings leaders have identified. The teachers have not received enough training or had opportunities to work together to share the best examples of marking.

- 
- The use of good and outstanding practice to help improve the performance of other teachers has not raised the standard of teaching enough.
  - Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of many of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have clear plans to address areas of concern. They are committed to raising standards and work closely with department leaders to bring this about. In English and mathematics, they have introduced a common format for monitoring the progress of all pupils, but with a special emphasis on the more vulnerable. Progress in these subjects has improved as a result.
  - The school has used the pupil premium to improve achievement in English and mathematics by providing one-to-one sessions with specialist teachers and extra revision. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and the school has plans to further improve the quality of the individual support it provides.
  - The school's leadership team has changed significantly since the last inspection. Recent appointees have driven welcome changes to the performance management process and begun to raise awareness of the importance of improving standards of literacy in all subjects.
  - This year, the local authority has supported the English department by checking the marking of mock examinations. This has resulted in improved consistency of marking. The local authority has also recently begun working with the mathematics department. It is too early to assess the impact of that support.
  - There are new systems for managing the performance of teachers and to give pay rises when these are justified. Teachers report that these systems contribute to improving their professional development by clearly linking targets to the national *Teachers' Standards*. The arrangements include a half-yearly review of teachers' progress towards targets.
  - The appointment of a new head of sixth form has led to closer monitoring of student progress and improved examination results.
  - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current regulatory requirements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors take a keen interest in and have a good understanding of the way the school works. They work closely with the senior and department leaders and meet with them regularly so that they know about the quality of teaching. Governors know how well pupils are achieving but do not challenge senior leaders enough to improve the rate of progress. They have a good understanding of the new system for managing teachers' performance and teachers' pay.
-

## 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>	124422
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406243

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1225
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Duncan Gleig
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Lister
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 267400
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 267499
<b>Email address</b>	office@friary.staffs.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

