

Turves Green Boys' School

Turves Green, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 4BS

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

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		Good	2
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 achieve well across a range of subjects. Despite recent improvement, progress in mathematics is slower than that in English. Students' attainment is below average.
- There is not yet enough consistently good or outstanding teaching to promote good progress.
- In some lessons work is not set at the right level for students and this slows progress.
- Teachers' written marking does not always show students how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always give students time to think about and correct work that has been marked so that students can move their learning on.
- Systems for checking and developing the quality of teaching have not yet been fully effective in ensuring it is consistently good.
- Until recently, governors have not challenged leaders enough about the school's performance or developed a more independent view through gathering evidence for themselves.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and knows exactly how to make it better.
- Teaching is improving and some is good and outstanding, featuring high expectations and probing questioning.
- Students mostly behave well in class and around the school. They get on well with each other and the teachers and feel safe.
- The school has taken effective action to improve attendance and reduce the numbers of students who are regularly absent. Attendance is now above average.
- The school has begun to raise the achievement of students whose circumstances make them eligible for additional funding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, including joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to other lessons and scrutinised students' work.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, heads of subject departments, teachers, teaching assistants, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, information about the subjects the school teaches, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The inspector also considered the views expressed in 34 questionnaires returned by school staff, along with the 38 responses submitted by parents to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Brown

Additional Inspector

Michael Marks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in January 2013.
- The school is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for those, in this school, who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority), is above the national average.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action is broadly average. The number supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of students are taught in alternative provision away from the school site at Bournville College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching throughout the school so that it is consistently good or better and accelerates students' progress by:
 - making sure teachers use assessment information to provide work that is closely matched to students' needs and abilities
 - ensuring that marking in all subjects informs students about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve
 - providing time for students to think about what teachers have said and written about their work and to make the appropriate improvements to their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that leaders streamline monitoring systems so that they are well timed and precise enough to lead to actions that improve the quality of teaching
 - ensuring the governing body finds out for itself sufficient information about the school's effectiveness in order to rigorously hold it to account for its work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Students' achievement requires improvement because too few students make good progress over time. This is because there is too much variation in the quality of teaching.
- Students join the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment in English and mathematics which are typically below average. By the end of Year 11, their attainment is still below average. Too few students gain five or more GCSE grades A*- C including English and mathematics.
- This year the school entered students early for GCSE mathematics. The results for these students show that, compared with 2012, the proportion gaining a good GCSE grade in the subject has already increased considerably. This new policy is encouraging students to reach their full potential and does not restrict them from achieving higher grades. Despite these recent improvements, many students do not make as much progress as they should in mathematics. Over time, the proportion of students making good progress is below average. The number of students gaining higher A* and A passes is well below average in mathematics.
- In English, the students have not made good progress over the last two years but their achievement has been better than in mathematics. However, school records of students' current attainment in English show that progress has accelerated this year.
- In other subjects, such as history, geography, and design and technology, students make better progress and their attainment is closer to the national average. Students respond enthusiastically because the lessons in these subjects are often more engaging.
- The school fosters good relations, tackles discrimination and works to remove barriers to learning so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Because of this, the achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of other students. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support individual students by demonstrating skills precisely, teaching subject-specific vocabulary and providing challenge and encouragement.
- Students for whom pupil premium funding provides support are now closing the gap in performance as compared with their classmates. In both English and mathematics, their standards improved from well over one GCSE grade below other students in 2011 to a grade below in 2012. Additional staffing, the use of revision materials, small group work and funding for educational visits are having an increasingly good impact.
- The school has recognised that some students enter the school with reading abilities well below those of their peers. It is using additional funding for Year 7 literacy well to provide additional help for these younger students. In a short period of time, they have made good progress in improving their reading skills.
- The progress and welfare of the small number of students who attend sessions at the local college is monitored carefully. These students benefit from the opportunity to follow work-related courses that appeal to their interests. Their needs are met well through tailored support and they make expected progress.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is not enough consistently good teaching to enable students to achieve well over time. Teaching requires improvement because the work is not always well enough matched to the different ability levels. When tasks are either too difficult or too easy, progress slows.
- Lesson observations, the school's monitoring data and scrutiny of students' work show that teaching is improving. There is some good practice in most subjects. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and many convey their enthusiasm for their subjects to their students, which helps to motivate them.
- Teachers are increasingly focusing on improving students' literacy skills and this helps them to improve the quality of their written work. Teachers do not plan many opportunities for students to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects and this contributes to the slower rates of progress in mathematics.
- The quality of marking varies considerably. The best contains high-quality written feedback, which gives students a clear indication of the level that they are working at, together with detailed and helpful guidance on how to improve their work. However, some consists only of brief comments, with very little guidance.
- The school has recently introduced 'green pen time'. One of its aims is to increase opportunities for students to review their own progress. This is not yet fully effective because there is not enough time set aside in lessons for students to think about what they have learned or act on the comments made by their teacher, so that they can understand how to improve their work.
- Where high-quality teaching was observed, teachers had high expectations, used questioning well to test students understanding and were very successful in encouraging students to work together to accelerate their progress. In a Year 11 history lesson, for example, the students worked very hard to answer an examination question. They then showed high levels of confidence when they marked each other's work and then went on to explain to each other about what they had learned about the history of medicine.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' conduct around the school is good. They are polite, courteous and friendly, offering help and assistance to visitors and other students. Relationships are positive throughout the school.
- The school has clear expectations for good behaviour and this is seen in the vast majority of lessons, where they are keen to participate and have a good attitude to learning. A few students occasionally misbehave and this spoils the learning and enjoyment of others. The good work of the school's isolation unit ensures that reducing proportions of boys are being temporarily excluded.
- The school council is run effectively by the students, is influential in the school and has raised considerable amounts of money for charities. Older students are keen to take on additional responsibilities and enjoy their role as prefects, where, for example, they ably assist teachers with lunchtime duties.
- Students have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including prejudice- and

cyber-based bullying. They say that bullying is rare and they are confident that staff would deal promptly with it.

- Attendance is now above average due to a range of successful strategies implemented, including the appointment of a member of staff to work with families. Students are punctual and breaktimes end promptly so that lessons start on time.
- Students say they feel safe at school. It provides a safe and secure environment that is valued and appreciated by students. The vast majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not had a strong enough impact on teaching and learning to lift pupils' achievement to good, although some improvements are evident.
- The new headteacher has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Governors and staff share the headteacher's determination to raise achievement. Plans to improve the school are based on accurate self-evaluation. Staff morale is high.
- Senior leaders have introduced a number of new initiatives through regular 'leadership link' meetings held with subject leaders, but there has not been time for these to show their full impact. Strategies for subject leaders to monitor student progress and improve teaching include 'state of the nation' and 'state of play' reviews. However, it is not always clear to teachers what they need to do to improve their effectiveness.
- This year, the school is ensuring that teachers' pay and promotion are linked better to the contribution that individual teachers are making to raising standards. Teachers are being held more accountable for the progress of their students and for the subjects they lead.
- Although the school still has further to go, the school's current data show that students are now making better progress than in recent years. The new tracking systems are helping leaders to check on the progress made by those students receiving support through the pupil premium. Students who need extra support are being identified more quickly.
- The subjects offered meet students' needs and include regular 'theme' days. For example Year 8 students enjoyed the recent Enterprise Day where they learned about teamwork, leadership and business skills. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively by visitors and visits, such as the recent poetry trip, together with a wide range of arts, music and sports activities.
- The local authority adviser linked to the school visits regularly to check that the school is arranging the support it needs from local schools to make the improvements needed in teaching. Governors noted that local authority training has given them a better insight into their roles and responsibilities.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are increasingly holding the school to account, regularly review their effectiveness

and have attended training to improve their ability to challenge leaders. They are aware that more needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching, raise attainment and accelerate students' progress. Some governors visit the school regularly, so that they know more about aspects of its day-to-day teaching and performance. However, until recently, they relied too much on the information provided by the headteacher. Governors know about the use of additional funds from the pupil premium to improve the achievement of the students entitled to it. They are increasingly ensuring that the salary progression of staff is justified.

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	103500
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	404880

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	550
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Hosfield
Headteacher	Simon Franks
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2011
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