

Perry Beeches the Academy

Beeches Road, Birmingham, B42 2PY

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- The leadership provided by the executive headteacher is outstanding. Under his leadership, the academy has become a beacon of outstanding practice. Leadership is strong throughout the academy.
- Students make outstanding progress. By the end of Year 11, their attainment is high. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress.
- Teachers deliver well-structured lessons that interest, motivate and engage students. Often this teaching is inspirational.
- Students feel very safe and their behaviour is exemplary. They display enthusiasm for learning and respect each other's views in class discussions.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. A particular feature is the strong participation of staff in masters level degree courses and foundation degrees where they can reflect on their practice and improve it further.
- The academy is outstandingly successful in developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This is evident within lessons, in the academy community, in links with the local community and in an international context.
- The academy has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The attendance and punctuality of students are both high.
- The governing body knows the academy well and is setting demanding targets for even greater improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons taught by 37 different teachers and made shorter visits to another 15 lessons. Many observations were carried out jointly with academy leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the associate headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body, directors of the Perry Beeches Academy Trust and students.
- Inspectors examined the 54 questionnaires completed by staff and the 65 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online Parent View website. They also considered letters from parents.
- Inspectors heard a small number of students read.

Inspection team

Robert Barbour, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
St John Burkett	Additional Inspector
Shahnaz Maqsood	Additional Inspector
Marian Marks	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is about the same size as the average-sized secondary school.
- About half of students are of White British heritage and about a fifth are of Caribbean heritage. About 9% are of Indian heritage, and 6% are of Pakistani and 6% of Bangladeshi heritage. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The academy is oversubscribed. For 2013, there are over five applications for every place available.
- A high proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. The academy receives specific pupil premium funding based on this number.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is high. The proportion supported at school action is above average.
- The academy does not make use of any off-site alternative educational provision.
- The academy surpasses the government's current floor standards, which represent the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy became a National Support School with the National College for School Leadership in 2011.
- Perry Beeches the Academy converted to become an academy on 3 May 2012. When its predecessor school, Perry Beeches School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The formation of the Perry Beeches Academies Trust means that governance of the academy is shared between a local governing body and the directors of the trust. The executive headteacher is also executive headteacher of a free school under the governance of the trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share further the outstanding teaching practice in the academy so that teachers use inspirational strategies even more frequently to deepen students' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is outstanding**

- Students who sat their GCSEs in 2012 started in Year 7 with low attainment. By the end of Year 11, their attainment was high. This represents outstanding progress; indeed, data indicate that it is among the very best of any school in the country. The progress that students make continues to be outstanding.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the academy gains pupil premium funding, also make outstanding progress. The proportion of these students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics in 2012 was so high that it surpassed the national proportion for students who do not qualify for free school meals. Within the academy, the progress made by these students was higher overall than for students not eligible for free school meals. In English and mathematics, these students made slightly less progress than other students in the academy in 2012, but the gap in progress had closed on 2011. Due to their different starting points in Year 7, however, the gap in grades attained in GCSE English and mathematics was a little wider in 2012 than 2011, at about half a grade in each subject.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress. The gap between their performance and other students is closing. Such data as is available shows that the small number of students looked after by the local authority make outstanding progress, although there were no such students in the 2012 Year 11 cohort.
- There is no material difference in the achievement of students by either their ethnic background or gender.
- Students sit some GCSE examinations before the end of Year 11. The way in which this is managed by the academy ensures that these students are not held back in their attainment. The academy seeks rather to use early entry as a motivator to higher achievement.
- Students display high skills in speaking and listening in their lessons. This is due to the intrinsic interest they have in their lessons and the high expectations that their teachers have for their participation. Most of all, it is due to the strong mutual respect which gives students the confidence that their teachers and their peers will value their opinions.
- Students' skills in reading are developing rapidly. Data on reading show exceptional progress in Year 7, including for those students receiving government-funded catch-up support.
- Students enjoy reading and they read widely. Student literacy champions offer active encouragement in reading to other students.

The quality of teaching **is outstanding**

- Teachers use a consistent lesson structure to give shape to their teaching and this helps students to relate to what they are learning. Teachers use clear learning objectives, and explain these carefully alongside a discussion of the level of the work. They plan for a good mix of teacher explanation and student activity.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students' progress. They use questioning very well, both to deepen students' understanding and to assess the progress that they are making. Good

use is made of small whiteboards for students to show their answers to questions and so to ensure that all are engaged.

- Every lesson has a literacy focus. Teachers display target words and encourage students to use these in their written and oral work. They also encourage the use of specific words of the week. In a science lesson, a teacher made very good use of target vocabulary provided to specifically identified students. This enabled them to achieve an equivalent standard of written work to others in the group.
- In the very best lessons, teachers use inspirational strategies to deepen learning. In a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher used a box of artefacts as a spur to students writing. The use of group, paired and individual work, along with a discussion of literary and structural techniques, led to students working with enthusiasm and producing written work of very high quality.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is also outstandingly good. Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting students to learn independently. They are all studying for foundation degrees and have been trained to meet a range of specific needs. In a Year 9 class in BTEC Sport, students with a range of special educational needs made outstanding progress as they practised and developed skills in coaching. They gained not just skills in the subject, but a range of personal skills that would be valuable to them throughout their lives.
- Some teaching, while good, did not lead to such deep learning. Sometimes, this was because the teacher had talked for too long and limited the opportunities for students to work for themselves. At other times, opportunities were missed to develop students' understanding of underlying ideas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- 'It's not just another school; it's a big family. This school is my second home. Without this school I would not have accomplished what I have'. This was how a disabled student described the academy. A parent commented: 'The pastoral care is amazing.'
- Both describe an academy where students do not merely behave well but feel they are members of a caring community, all of whose members are valued and who have their skills developed. Staff and students see themselves as joint members of this community with common expectations of behaviour, and a common enthusiasm for learning. Students are immensely proud of the academy.
- Students' behaviour around the academy is exemplary and records show that this is maintained over time. Close links are maintained with parents, especially if any concerns arise.
- Students say that they feel outstandingly safe and they understand how to keep safe. In Year 9, they take an active part in anti-bullying campaigns.
- Students are given responsibilities from early in their time at the academy. The academy council has had an impact on many areas of the academy, and students even assist in the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Academy leaders regard student leadership as an integral part of the leadership of the academy.
- Attendance at the academy is high. Punctuality to the academy in the morning and to lessons during the day is very good.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher has overseen a transformation from a predecessor school which six years ago had among the lowest student progress nationwide to an academy with one of the very highest now. This is indicative of outstanding skills and commitment.
- Leadership is strong throughout the academy. Leaders share the vision for every student's success. The leadership of teaching is highly effective. Leaders assess the quality of teaching accurately and put relevant professional development in place. Currently 11 teachers have completed, and 40 teachers are taking, an MA qualification involving them reflecting on and improving their practice.
- The management of performance is rigorous. As would be expected in such a high performing academy, a high proportion of teachers move up pay scales. This is far from universal, however. There are high expectations for performance for all staff, including the executive headteacher. Teaching assistants have the same rigour in their performance management as teachers, and they appreciate the opportunities they are given for their development.
- The pupil premium has been well targeted to improve the academic performance of the eligible students through mentoring, smaller class sizes and through measures to improve self-esteem. Its use has been highly effective.
- The academy's curriculum is relevant and rich. Care is taken to make it flexible and personalised. Its success is apparent in the very low number of students who do not move on to employment, education or training in an area of above-average social deprivation. Students benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- The academy has been outstandingly successful in developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Students speak movingly of the impact that Black History Month has had on them, and also the initiatives exploring prejudice towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Links with the West Midlands Police have been productive. International links with schools in India are actively maintained.
- The directors of the Perry Beeches Academies Trust judge the academy to be outstanding. They have provided the academy with a School Improvement Partner to ensure continuing high-level support and challenge for the executive headteacher and local governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the local governing body have a good understanding of the strengths of the academy and actively challenge leaders to continue improving further. They ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are in place and that they fully meet regulatory requirements. They monitor the performance management of academy staff and manage the performance of the executive headteacher rigorously. They visit the academy often to monitor its progress in meeting demanding targets, and are fully aware of the effectiveness of the use of funding, including the pupil premium.

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	138141
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	419874

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	913
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Scotson
Headteacher	Liam Nolan (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 3604242
Fax number	0121 3666014
Email address	Enquiry@pb-theacademy.co.uk

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