

Small Heath School

Muntz Street, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 9RX

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 school provides an exceptionally high quality of education for its students. They make outstanding academic progress, with GCSE results improving year on year over the past three years.
- Teachers have very high expectations for what students can achieve, and develop excellent working relationships in the classroom. Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Teachers provide first-class feedback to their students in class about how they can improve their work. Comments in books are not so well focused on helping students to improve.
- Attendance is consistently well above national averages.
- Students are very proud of their school. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.
- Students feel safe and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe.
- The sixth form is outstanding and students make excellent progress, particularly at AS level. Students receive first-rate information, advice and guidance, which help them to make well-informed decisions about future employment, education and training.
- The headteacher is very ably supported by his senior leadership team. School leaders have a strong track record of improving teaching and achievement.
- The very experienced governing body is exceptionally effective. Governors provide a high level of both support and challenge for the school and are committed to its continued improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 54 lessons, 12 of which were paired observations carried out with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, governors and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of school documents, including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 104 questionnaires returned by school staff, but could not take into account anything from the online Parent View survey as there were not enough responses at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Myers

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Dorothy Bond

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Susan Lewis

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Glen Goddard

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for particular groups, which in this school applies to students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the very few looked after by the local authority) is very high.
- The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below 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.
- The school hosts a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This hearing impaired resource base is shared with Bordesley Green Girls School and managed by the local authority. There are currently a very small number of students in the base.
- Year 12 and some Year 11 students were on study leave during the inspection.
- No students are currently educated on other sites.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the rate of students' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all marking of students' work provides specific guidance on areas for improvement
 - students are routinely given opportunities to respond to their teachers' comments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The students' GCSE examination results have improved every year over the past three years, and at a rate faster than the national average. Students typically start the school with attainment well below national averages. They make outstanding progress and their attainment, including the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics, is slightly above average when they leave. The school's information, based on examination modules already taken and accurate assessments of how well students are doing, shows that students are on track to achieve even better results in 2013.
- Use of early entry GCSE mathematics has been very effective in improving attainment. It has also raised these students' self-esteem and their belief that they can succeed. Students make good and often outstanding progress in individual lessons. This is reflected in performance data, which show that the proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics compares very well to national averages, and is particularly high in English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because staff identify their individual needs early and arrange the right additional help. Teachers and teaching assistants support students expertly, providing challenge and encouragement and helping them with subject-specific vocabulary. The very small number of deaf students make good progress in practical subjects. They do not always spend enough time with the specialist teachers of the deaf and slows their linguistic progress. The school and local authority are highly aware of this and are taking decisive action to improve students' communication.
- Senior leaders and heads of department monitor attainment and progress very closely and act quickly to address any concerns about individual students and groups. For example, pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is used to provide additional and well-planned support for eligible pupils. It has been used for one-to-one tuition, target setting and software and phonics. As a result, the attainment and progress in English and mathematics of eligible students are in line with those of their classmates.
- Students' skills in reading are developing rapidly. Well-considered and effective reading support is provided for students who need it. Consequently, the majority of students read and write well and communicate confidently. This, alongside very effective teaching, contributes extremely well to students making rapid progress in English. The school is already using similar strategies to further develop students' numeracy skills.
- Students make excellent progress in the school's well-established sixth form, with many of them exceeding challenging targets in 2012. By the end of the sixth form, results are at least in line with, and some above, the national averages for most subjects. The school's predictions, based on accurate assessments of how well students are doing, show that sixth-form students are also on track to achieve even better results in 2013.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The school's records indicate that teaching is good and often outstanding. This was confirmed during the inspection, where the teaching observed was consistently highly effective in capturing students' interest and engagement.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and explain very clearly what they want students to

do. As a result they create an exceptionally positive climate in the classroom that encourages students to succeed. Teachers carefully set work to challenge students of different abilities.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive high-quality support in lessons and in 'The House' - a remarkable facility offering support for students who are emotionally vulnerable or find it difficult to manage their behaviour in school. Teachers and support staff work together effectively and help is matched well to students' needs. This ensures that students make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Teachers provide high-quality constructive feedback to students verbally but written feedback, in the form of marking, is more variable. In the best practice, teachers' written comments, which show students what they need to do to improve their work, often contribute to the progress they make. Students value this kind of feedback, particularly when they are given the opportunity to reflect and respond to the comments. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school.
- Teachers use questioning very skilfully to promote students' thinking. For example, in a Year 7 art lesson where teaching was outstanding, students had to assess their own work towards the end of the lesson. The teacher's well-chosen, probing questions quickly helped the students to make accurate judgements.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers ensure that students understand key subject ideas in the level of depth that will enable them to achieve the higher grades. Consequently, sixth formers are making excellent progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They attend regularly, arrive on time to lessons and follow the school's expectations readily. Students' movement around the school and behaviour in lessons are calm, considerate and courteous at all times.
- Students take great pride in their school, have highly positive attitudes to learning and are very keen to do their best in class. School surveys show that the vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are safe and happy in school, and are very positive about behaviour in the school.
- Students say that bullying is very rare but when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are aware of the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber bullying, and know what to do if it occurs.
- The school makes every effort to provide a safe and secure environment that is valued and appreciated by everyone. Students display an excellent understanding of the issues relating to safety. They talk very confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as using the internet and social networking sites.
- The school takes thorough action to ensure that students' attendance remains well above average. It is consistently in the top 20% in the country.
- Sixth-form students receive outstanding information, support and guidance. They make a worthwhile contribution to the life of the school, for example by contributing to wide range of

extra-curricular activities and offering support for younger students.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide excellent leadership. Governors and staff are very proud of the school and are fully committed to its success. There is an obvious determination to ensure that all students achieve the highest standards they can. Leaders use well-developed systems and processes to check and evaluate the school's performance. As a result they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas requiring further improvement.
 - The school has a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning because leaders are skilled in making judgements on the quality of lessons. In the 12 lesson observations carried out with members of the senior leadership team, the judgements of inspectors and leaders on the quality of teaching matched in every case.
 - Teachers and support staff comment positively on the opportunities they have for ongoing training to develop their skills. The impact of this training is reflected in the high quality of teaching and support seen in lessons. Staff morale is extremely high.
 - Teachers are held accountable for the progress of the students they teach, and subject and year leaders for the areas they are responsible for. Their performance is clearly linked to pay rises and promotion.
 - The wide range of GCSE, AS-level and A-level subjects and courses offered meets students' needs exceptionally well in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school ensures that the individual needs of all students are met. In addition, there is an exceptional number of extra activities on offer to students outside the normal school day.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted by a very broad range of arts, drama, music and sports activities, as well as by visits to other places in this country and abroad. Year on year students have raised a considerable sum of money in order to help a school they sponsor in Pakistan.
 - The local authority is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, and has worked well with senior leaders to support ongoing improvement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors receive regular and comprehensive information from the headteacher and other leaders. They know the school very well and are fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses because they visit regularly. Governors have a deep insight into the quality of teaching and students' performance. They ensure that the use of additional funds from the pupil premium improves the achievement of the students entitled to it. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly, and ensures that staff pay rises and promotion are justified. Governors check regularly to make sure that safeguarding practices and procedures meet current national requirements.
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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	103548
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	411783

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1324
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kalsoom Zubedah-Khan
Headteacher	Peter Slough
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2010
Telephone number	0121 464 7997
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Email address	mail@smallheathschool.org.uk

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