

# Smestow School, A Specialist Sports College

Windmill Crescent, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton, WV3 8HU

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in school and leave with GCSE results that are above the national average.
- Teaching is good, leading to above average GCSE results overall and in most subjects, and especially English and mathematics, well above average results.
- Governors and senior leaders have a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The targeted actions of senior staff are improving teaching and outcomes for all students.
- Pupils behave well and say that they feel safe. They say bullying does not happen often and that it is quickly dealt with when it does occur. Students are tolerant and value difference.
- Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. Staff know students well and they quickly intervene when they need help.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students especially value the range of sporting opportunities available to them, including the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. They make highly valued contributions to the local community.
- Overall the sixth form is good. Achievement is improving and students are highly positive about their experiences at school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While there is some outstanding teaching, some requires improvement.
- Some teachers do not provide enough guidance to students through marking to help them improve.
- Students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not developed sufficiently across all subjects.
- Students in the sixth form are not always prepared for their sixth form study as well as they might be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons taught by 40 teachers; some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors analysed the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to and during the inspection. In total, there were 12 responses.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school improvement plan, information about students' progress minutes of meetings of the governing body, attendance data and records showing how the school cares for and protects students.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff and senior leaders.

## Inspection team

Jane Millward, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Humphries

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Janet Harvey

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium which is additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals, for those looked after in public care, and for children of service families, is average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school includes a resource base for 12 visually impaired students who are fully integrated into the school.
- The school's performance meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A partnership arrangement exists for Post-16 provision where some students are educated at Aldersley High School, The Kings C of E School, Highfields, Science Specialist College and St Peter's High School.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement to outstanding by:
  - ensuring marking is of a consistently high standard in every subject, giving students clear guidance on how to improve and allowing them time to discuss and reflect on the advice given
  - increase the use of outstanding teachers to support those who need to improve
  - encouraging students to work more by themselves or with other students
  - developing reading, writing and mathematics skills in all lessons.
- Strengthen the preparation of students for post- 16 study by:
  - working with students to develop an increased range of independent study skills appropriate to A level courses
  - developing advice and guidance systems to ensure students choose appropriate courses in order to achieve the best exam results.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to Smestow is in line with the national average. Attainment at GCSE is higher than the national expectations. The proportion of students who achieve five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics is much higher than the national figure.
- The standards reached represent good progress overall. This is because students' progress is tracked rigorously and interventions are quickly put in place when students need help to catch up with their learning. The proportions of students making expected progress in English and mathematics are better than those found nationally.
- Those students who are disabled or those who have special educational needs make good progress overall because of the good teaching they receive and the well planned and targeted support of other adults. Students with visual impairment are integrated well into school life because their needs are very well met.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium to provide extra support and staffing to help students who are eligible. Current school records show that they are making good progress in line with other groups, and that the gap between their attainment and that of other students is starting to close. Presently pupil premium students in Key Stage 4 are on average half grade behind non pupil premium pupils in both English and mathematics.
- Reading is encouraged across the school and students read well. The lowest ability students receive help to link sounds and letter together to help them read effectively. The Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide reading support, which has resulted in improvements in some students' reading ages. The library is popular with students and they report they are encouraged to read a wide variety of books.
- The school has a strategy whereby some students are entered early for English and mathematics GCSE. This decision has been carefully considered and is regularly evaluated. Students continue to study English and mathematics and as a result, attainment is better than the national average in these subjects.
- Although achievement in the sixth form is good overall, nevertheless progress for a few students slows because they are not prepared and supported for their studies as well as they might be. The sixth form students who study off-site for part of their education make good progress because of the well-tailored provision. Arrangements for monitoring their progress, attendance and punctuality are good.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is leading to students' good progress overall. Outstanding teaching is evident in both key stages and in the sixth form but there is a small amount of teaching that still requires improvement.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to work well together and to share and develop their ideas. For example, in groups, students enthusiastically planned a courtroom scene using *Romeo and Juliet* as the stimulus in a Year 10 English lesson.

- Teachers build good relationships with their students and consistently show concern and consideration for them as individuals. They provide well targeted support and the use of additional adults is used well to help students who are disabled, those with special educational needs and students who are eligible for the pupil premium.
- Over time the quality of teaching is improving. This is because the senior leaders work very effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A system is in place where the best teachers work with and support teachers who require help to improve their teaching. This model is working well across the school, but there is scope for it to be extended further.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to use questioning effectively to deepen students' understanding. In the very best lessons, teachers plan interesting and imaginative activities. Learning proceeds at a good pace and homework is used to regularly reinforce students' understanding.
- In the lessons where teaching was less than good, the pace of learning is slower and students are not always pushed to move on quickly enough. Often the teacher provides too much direction and, as a result, students are not given enough opportunity to work by themselves.
- The quality of marking is not always good enough to make sure that all students know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers give thought to how to extend and reinforce students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics across all subjects. However, this is not always made clear to students and opportunities are sometimes missed to extend these skills.

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

- Students behave well in lessons and extremely well around the school. Parents agree that the school makes sure its students are well behaved. Students are keen to learn and work well with their teachers. One student told an inspector, 'One of the best things is the relationship with teachers. They are always available to help us.'
- Relationships are very good. Students are polite and friendly towards adults and treat each other with respect and consideration. As one student stated, 'The school is like one big community with lots of opportunities.' Students work well together and discuss their ideas with each other maturely.
- Students have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying rarely happens but, if it does, staff deal with it effectively and sensitively. The school fosters good relationships between different groups of students.
- Students are encouraged to use modern technology safely and are well informed about the dangers of the internet and cyber-bullying.
- Sixth form students provide good role models for younger students and make many positive contributions to the school and local community.
- All parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire agreed that their child feels

safe in school and is well looked after.

- Attendance is in line with the national average. Leaders have recently introduced a more rigorous tracking and follow up process which is leading to improvements in the rates of attendance.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher is ambitious, provides strong leadership and has a clear plan for how the school will develop as well as high expectations of all staff and students. The senior leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and their skills complement each other very well.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Lessons are regularly observed by school leaders and they also gather information about pupils' progress, by carrying out book scrutinies and gathering students' views. The systems to manage the performance of teachers are rigorous. Underperformance is tackled and the regular checking of teaching leads to effective professional development on a whole-school, departmental and individual basis. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Senior leaders know the school well. They are determined to improve the school, to become outstanding. Departments are 'spot lighted' for a review by senior leaders when information about students' progress indicates any concerns. As a result, school leaders have an accurate and up-to-date view of how students in all subject areas are performing.
- Plans to help the school improve are clear and firmly focused on helping the school move from good to outstanding. As a result, standards across the school are improving. There is a continual focus on improving the quality of teaching which runs through all improvement plans.
- Effective school improvement groups have been set up to lead aspects of school development. The groups include a broad range of staff and they investigate ways to improve teaching. For example, creatively using technology in a range of subjects.
- The curriculum is well planned and regularly reviewed. It is further adapted to the individual needs of the learners, for example, an ex-student spends time mentoring students who find school a challenge.
- The local authority provides support to the school through regular visits from a school improvement officer. There is a positive working relationship between the school's leaders and the local authority. The monitoring is light-touch and includes reviewing the school's performance, examining self-evaluation and advice about performance management.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and play a strong part in its development. They are clear that teaching which falls short of the mark is not rewarded inappropriately. Decisions about teachers' pay are taken after careful analysis of their performance. They are fully aware of the school's procedures to manage teachers' performance. Governors are involved in school evaluation and, as a result, they know the strengths and weaknesses. Work focusing on specific areas is regularly carried out for example, examining the effectiveness of homework and written feedback to students. Governors are visible around school and are involved in visiting lessons, looking at students'

work and meeting with students. As a result, they know about the quality of teaching and about the standards students achieve. There are some inconsistencies in the application of policies and procedures for which the governors are responsible.

## 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>	104389
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	404056

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<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>	994
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	179
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Wrigley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martyn Morgan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558585
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