

# Brownhills School

Deakin Avenue, Brownhills, Walsall, WS87QG

**Inspection dates** 6–7 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		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well from low starting points. GCSE results have been broadly in line with national averages over the last few years but achievement is now set to improve significantly.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. It is improving rapidly as a result of focused training for teachers and rigorous management of staff performance.
- As a result of highly effective leadership the school is rapidly improving with students in the current Year 11 now achieving above national averages. Achievement in mathematics has improved since the last inspection.
- The sixth form is good, offering an increasing range of appropriate courses. This is ensuring that all students in the sixth form make good progress.
- The school is a positive community where students behave well and feel safe. They form good relationships with each other and with adults.
- Attendance has much improved since the last inspection and, as a result of the better teaching and effective support, the number of exclusions has rapidly reduced.
- Members of the governing body know the school well and regularly check on students' achievement. They are highly effective in supporting the headteacher in making improvements.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. At times, not all students are given opportunities to develop skills in finding out things for themselves.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because some small inconsistencies exist between subjects and recent high levels of achievement have yet to be sustained over a period of time.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, including eight observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with students, the headteacher, other senior and subject leaders, an external advisor, other staff and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team scrutinised school documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is performing, the school development plan, school policies and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered views from 22 completed staff questionnaires and 37 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), along with the school's own analysis of parents' and carers' views.

## Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Litawski	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector
Lesley Greenway	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than the average-sized secondary school
- Most students are White British and few students speak English as an additional language.
- An above average proportion of students are eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services).
- The school is part of an education Trust which includes University College Birmingham, Walsall College and Bartley Green School
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school sends a small number of students in Key Stage 4 to Walsall College to study vocational courses that it does not provide itself, such as Hair and Beauty.
- The school works with Walsall College to provide courses for a small number of students that it does not offer.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve achievement by eliminating inconsistencies across subjects and making sure that recent improvements in achievement are sustained and built upon.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching further by ensuring teachers:
  - continue to share the very best practice in the school and learn from each other
  - give all students enough opportunities to understand how they learn and to develop the skills to find out things and learn for themselves
  - challenge students' thinking by planning demanding tasks that encourage them to discuss ideas and closely analyse their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students make good progress. They enter Year 7 with low and sometimes very low levels of attainment compared to national averages. Students in Year 11 leave with GCSE results broadly in line with national averages. Significant improvements can be seen in recent analysis of achievement. The proportion of Year 11 students leaving in 2013 who are on track to gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including in English and mathematics, is above the national average.
- There is some small variability between the performance of some subject areas. Actions taken by the school to reduce this variability are effective. For example, achievement in mathematics is now much stronger than in previous years, although performance in some areas, such as technology, is still not as strong as that in the very best performing subjects, such as English.
- Over time, progress in English has been strong with the percentage of students making typically expected progress being above average. This has been supported effectively by consistent strategies to develop students literacy skills across the whole school. Although students' progress in mathematics has not been as strong, the school's effective tracking systems show that current students are making at least the expected progress in both English and mathematics.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good as a result of a broad range of appropriate courses now in place.
- Those students eligible for the pupil premium achieve above national averages and although a gap still exists between them and other students it is closing rapidly, particularly in English and mathematics where extra funding has increased the support and attainment for these students. They lag approximately two thirds of a grade behind their peers.
- The school's policy of early examination entry is entirely appropriate for students; it enhances their achievement and has ensured, for example, that students' progress in mathematics is now nearly as good as in English.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination effectively. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are very well supported and achieve well.
- Those students with English as an additional language and those from a variety of ethnic groups make the same good progress as their classmates.
- The few students that follow alternative courses at Walsall College achieve well and make good progress in line with their peers in school.
- Those Year 7 students in need of catch-up work in literacy are benefiting from additional support. As a result of effective work in the Toe By Toe accelerated reading programme, these students' reading ages quickly develop.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice in a range of subjects. Recently, the quality of teaching has improved quickly as a result of effective strategies to share the very best practice and the challenge provided by leaders to help weaker teachers improve.
- The school's focus on developing teaching and learning, and eradicating any inadequate teaching, is having an impact. A stronger group of teachers is starting to maximise the potential of students and as a result increasing proportions of teaching are good and outstanding. The school's own evaluation of the strengths and areas of teaching to improve is accurate.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Teachers are always clear about what is expected in the lesson. They provide good resources and check students' understanding through regular assessment.

- Teachers set out clear learning intentions to students and show good subject knowledge. As a result students are engaged in the vast majority of lessons. When teaching is not as strong, some students sometimes lose focus and do not make as much progress as they should.
- The best teaching ensures that students are fully involved in their own learning. Teachers make sure that students are fully challenged to develop the skills they need to find things out for themselves and become more independent in their learning.
- In the best lessons observed during the inspection, teachers were creative and built in a variety of tasks to ensure learning was fast paced and provided stretch and challenge for all students. For example, in a PE lesson tablet computers were used well to evaluate the individual performance of students. This allowed students to have a far more detailed view of performance and enabled them to be confident in giving high-quality feedback to each other.
- Where teaching is not as strong, teachers spend too long talking to students and do not plan enough activities or time to ensure that students develop their own learning skills. Students become too reliant on their teachers telling them what to do and do not always develop their own capacity to think for themselves and push themselves further. In such lessons, questioning is not used well enough to encourage students to think for themselves or develop their own understanding.
- Students appreciate the effective support given by teaching assistants in one-to-one situations but the school recognises that, in a few cases, it needs to fully develop their role within the classroom to maximise students' potential.

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

- The behaviour of students around the school and in lessons is good. Students are friendly and polite to each other and visitors. Students' attitudes to learning are good and they are very proud of their school and the changes that have taken place over recent years that, they say, have led to it becoming even better.
- Students, parents, carers and staff are positive about behaviour over time. Students feel safe and parents and carers have confidence in the school's management of students and the provision provided.
- Students say bullying is rare and feel confident that if they ever had a problem they could tell staff who would then deal with the issue.
- Attendance is rapidly improving and students' punctuality is good. The school's own tracking and analysis of data show that it continues to improve year on year and far fewer students are now underachieving because of low attendance. However, the school is not complacent and is striving to make further improvements in this area.
- Strategies used by the school to reduce exclusion have been highly effective with far fewer students now missing days from school as a result of exclusion.
- In the vast majority of lessons students behave very well, although where the teaching is less engaging some small low-level disruption occasionally takes place. The school is keen to eradicate this disruption in its determination to make behaviour and safety outstanding.
- Students talk extensively of the support they get in keeping themselves safe when using technology and value the education and advice they receive about this aspect when using it at home.
- Those students that attend off-site provision feel safe and conduct themselves in line with their peers in school.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, supported by a highly effective senior team, has worked successfully to ensure that leadership at all levels is rigorous and focused on continued improvement. As a result, subject leaders have the support and skills to continually develop achievement in their subject areas.
  - The school has very strong capacity for further improvement. Teaching, behaviour and achievement have all improved recently as a result of highly effective leadership. A staff team is now in place to ensure that all students achieve their potential and that excellent achievement is sustained over a period of time.
  - Robust management of teachers' performance has resulted in considerable improvements in teaching. Staff have been supported effectively with a personalised training programme. Teachers speak very highly of the support they have received to improve teaching.
  - Parents and carers have confidence in the school and its work. The school has put in place a large range of strategies to engage parents and carers with the education of their children. As a result parental engagement has increased.
  - The school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding.
  - The school has worked highly effectively with its Trust partners over a period of time to ensure that it improves its work. Partnerships have helped raise aspirations for students and also offered support to the school's improvement.
  - The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and is continually reviewed to ensure that it gives it students the best possible chances to achieve well. Changes in the sixth form curriculum, for example, have seen improved progress for students in post-16 provision.
  - The school makes use of extensive partnerships, not least through its Trust status and its school improvement consultant, to provide external support and challenge. This has been highly effective in making significant improvements over time and consequently the Local Authority are not used for any school improvement work.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and achievement in the school. They keep themselves informed with regular updates and training when required. They provide highly effective support to the school and ensure that they continually review and put in place the skills needed within their group to support the headteacher in her drive for continued improvement. Governors have an excellent understanding of the performance management processes and the links between these, teaching and achievement. They are very supportive of the headteacher's work to improve the quality of teaching in the school. They are fully aware of the achievement of the pupil premium cohort in the school and the use of additional funding to support improvement. Governors hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account very well through the use of appropriate information on students' achievement. They are aware of the school's performance compared to that of others.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1042248
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	412778

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>	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>	700
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Parr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Keenan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 452886
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