

The Wordsley School Business and Enterprise and Music College

Brierley Hill Road, Wordsley, Stourbridge, DY8 5SP

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Leaders have not ensured that there is enough good and outstanding teaching to enable students to make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Students do not make sufficient progress because the work is often the same for all, and not challenging for many more able students.
- Students' achievement in English is improving but not as quickly as in mathematics. Achievement in some science courses is too low.
- The range of courses offered at Key Stage 4 does not enable all students to fulfil their academic potential.
- The governing body does not hold school leaders rigorously to account for the efficient management of financial resources relating to the deployment of staff.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, has risen steadily over the last three years.
- There is some outstanding teaching in music, geography and history. Teachers across all subjects work hard to help students develop their skills in reading and writing.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students show high levels of respect for each other and their teachers. Attendance is above average.
- School leaders make sure that students are well cared for and supported in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons. Six of these were joint observations with school leaders.
- Four groups of students met with inspectors. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, and a representative of the local authority. A meeting was also held with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of 79 questionnaires completed by staff. Additionally, inspectors read letters written by a parent and a teacher at a local primary school which were sent to the inspection team.
- Inspectors read a range of documents. These included information on the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, improvement plans, students' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ahson Mohammed

Additional Inspector

Susan Tabberer

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Suha Ahmad

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school, and has specialist status for business and enterprise and music.
- The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for those from service families and for students known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion of students at school action plus or who are assessed with a statement of educational needs, is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Fifty-seven students attend off-site provision for part of their learning. This is organised through a range of providers, including Dudley College, Summerhill School, The Kingswinford School, The Crestwood School and Halesowen College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good and accelerate students' progress by ensuring:
 - teachers consistently plan work that closely matches the needs of every student
 - teachers raise the level of challenge for all students, particularly the most able, in all classes
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring:
 - the range of courses provided at Key Stage 4 meets the needs, abilities and aptitudes of all students, particularly in science, so that all groups of students make faster progress
 - whole-school targets are more demanding and encourage teachers to have higher expectations of what students can achieve
 - the school's assessment of its performance is more precise and rigorous, particularly in its evaluation of the success of actions to improve achievement
 - an external review of governance is undertaken to ensure the Governing Body provides greater challenge for senior leaders about the school's performance, and holds them more rigorously to account for the efficient management of financial resources and the deployment of staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades including mathematics and English has risen over the past three years. The proportion of students achieving A* to C grades in other subjects is increasing but in some subjects it is still low and the progress of too many groups of students is below that expected nationally.
- In 2012, students made less progress than expected in English, and less progress than they made in mathematics although slightly over half the year group achieved above average results in English literature. There is evidence that action taken to improve literacy is leading to higher standards for students currently in the school but it is too early to say how well these improvements will be sustained.
- Over time students' achievement in science has been too low because the quality of teaching is too variable. Although students who studied the applied science double award made good progress in 2012, overall, students' progress was significantly below that expected. Senior leaders have since put plans in place to make sure that all students study courses in science that are appropriate to their needs and abilities but it is too early to gauge their impact.
- A number of students study off-site for part of their learning. Although these courses are broadly suitable for most, a very small minority are capable of studying at a higher level and achieving more than they do.
- In mathematics, achievement is improving and students make expected progress. Students' achievement in music is above average because teaching is regularly outstanding. This reflects well on the school's specialism. In business studies, students' achievement is in line with the national average. Small numbers of students make above average progress in Spanish.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that expected nationally. Students make slightly better progress in mathematics because they receive good support from a specialist teaching assistant.
- Students eligible for pupil premium funding have in the past made less progress than other students. These gaps are closing as leaders' actions to address these issues begin to show impact. Students are exceptionally positive about the school's work with a local FE college and the University of Worcester to raise their aspirations, a project which is funded by the pupil premium. Current data indicate the gap between the attainment of students is narrowing; students are now just two terms behind their peers in English and mathematics.
- 'Year 7 catch-up funding' is being used to give students extra support with their literacy but this is a new initiative for the school, and it is still too early to gauge its impact.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is too often inconsistent in quality within and across subjects and does not enable students to make good enough progress over time.
- School monitoring shows that inadequate teaching is extremely rare. During this inspection the majority of teaching was judged to be good but some teaching required improvement.

- Where teaching is not good, it is characterised by a lack of challenge for some groups of students, especially the more able. There are few opportunities for students to learn independently because teachers dominate discussion and the direction lessons take, and do not provide sufficient opportunities in lessons for students to show their initiative.
- In a Year 10 information technology lesson, students made good progress by using training clips prepared by the teacher to work independently at their own pace. This approach is rare because in many other lessons there is a 'one size fits all' approach where students are given the same work to do. This slows the pace of learning for all students as the work is either too easy or too hard.
- In all lessons observed by inspectors, teachers were well prepared and made sure that lessons had a clear structure and precise objectives to guide students' learning. Some examples of outstanding practice were observed in music, geography and history. Students in these lessons are making rapid progress.
- Marking is good across most subjects. Examples of outstanding marking and assessment were noted in English where students receive clear feedback from teachers on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Attendance is above the national average because students are happy and enjoy coming to school. Students say they feel safe and parents agree. Mixed-age tutor groups create a shared sense of community. Students are proud of their school.
- Students are well aware of the various forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that bullying is very rare and that staff deal effectively with any incidents which arise. Students have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Around school students are polite and courteous with adults and each other. Students from different backgrounds get on well. Between lessons, their behaviour is safe and orderly. There is good monitoring of the safety and attendance of those students who attend alternative placements.
- Students proudly wear the badges they receive as a result of the excellent well-established system of rewards. The school's 'Phoenix award' motivates students to believe it is never too late to change. Students have the opportunity to take on leadership responsibilities through prefect and head girl and boy roles.
- Although a very small number of parents responded to the online questionnaire, the school regularly surveys parents' opinions and takes account of their views. One parent contacted the inspection team to describe the school's good care and support for her child with special educational needs.
- All students feel extremely well supported and cared for, both socially and academically. Students told inspectors that as a result of the extra support and mentoring they receive they feel, 'it's almost harder to fail'. The school now operates an additional 'Period 7 system' to support students who have difficulties with their homework.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, where teaching is less effective, students can be passive

and do not show enough initiative to learn independently.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have brought about improvements in students' attainment, which has risen steadily over three years, and worked hard to improve students' literacy across all subject areas. Nevertheless, most groups of students are failing to make the rapid progress that they need if standards are to rise.
- School improvement plans identify clear actions but senior leaders' assessment of the school's performance is too lengthy and over-reliant on the surveys of parents, students and staff. The impact of actions the school has taken to improve is not clearly evaluated.
- Data is used well to track students' attainment but whole-school targets for improving the progress expected from students are not ambitious enough.
- Staff performance is regularly monitored and teachers are checked against the national teachers' standards but structures are not sufficiently robust as yet to inform decisions around pay and reward good performance.
- The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides students with options and choices but too many students are not encouraged by the courses they follow to aspire to the higher standards they are capable of.
- Systems to monitor the quality of teaching are in place and are leading to improvements. Senior leaders carry out regular reviews of subject areas and have undertaken paired lesson observations with a local authority adviser to check on their accuracy. Subject leaders are fully involved in observing lessons and monitoring learning in their areas. Training sessions give staff opportunities to share ideas and best practice.
- Extra-curricular activities include a wide range of clubs and international study visits and are much appreciated by students.
- All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire said they were proud to work at the school and know what it is trying to achieve.
- Good support from the local authority has helped school leaders to improve students' literacy across all subject areas.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school, as shown by students' good behaviour and their positive interactions with staff. Planned days give students a more in-depth understanding of issues such as diversity, the environment and disability. Many students speak enthusiastically about how the school's music specialism influences both their study and social time.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of how teachers' performance is being managed and what is being done to improve the quality of teaching. They have reviewed published school performance data and know that there is a marked gap in the achievement of students.

- Governors are committed to supporting the school by attending appropriate training.
- Governors need extra assistance to support and challenge senior leaders' management of financial resources and the school deployment of staff. An external audit of the governing body is therefore recommended.

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	103858
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	412746

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	752
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Betteridge
Headteacher	Michael Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
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