

# King's Norton Boys' School

Northfield Road, Birmingham, B30 1DY

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Achievement requires improvement because students are not yet making consistently good progress.
- Teaching is not consistently good and, as a result, students do not make the same good progress in all subjects and year groups.
- Teachers sometimes give work that is too easy and do not use questions well enough to encourage students to think deeply. Marking is not always used well enough to help students improve their work.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes in lessons, despite improving markedly, do not always sustain a good pace of learning.
- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and learning although improving, are not yet consistently good.
- There are inconsistencies in the way some subject leaders check how well students are achieving in their subject areas.
- Leaders and governors have had an over-optimistic view on how well the school is performing compared with others nationally.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students' achievement across subjects and courses is too variable.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have successfully improved the quality of teaching. This has led to better progress for current students and GCSE results in 2013 were better than those in 2012.
- Although students supported by the pupil premium funding make slower progress than their peers in the recent past, this gap is closing.
- Students make good progress in developing their reading skills.
- Students behave well around the school. They feel safe and say they enjoy school.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is tackling the school's weaknesses with energy and precision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons or parts of lessons, including six that were seen together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at students' progress in mathematics, English and science, and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and subject leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, groups of students and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of students' work.
- Inspectors took note of 79 responses from parents on the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' and students' responses to the school's own recent surveys, and written comments made by parents were considered. Inspectors also analysed the 42 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Macfarlane

Additional Inspector

Alan Johnson

Additional Inspector

Suha Ahmad

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Just over a quarter of all students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest group being students of White and Black Caribbean heritage.
- The proportion of students who are learning English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students that are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average. There are currently a very small number of students in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average; the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A very small number of students spend some of their time studying work-related courses at South Birmingham College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

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

- Improve teaching so that all pupils make good progress by making sure that:
  - teachers have consistently high expectations and set work at the right level for all students, especially the more-able
  - all lessons motivate students and encourage high levels of attentiveness
  - marking makes clear to students what they need to do to improve their work and requires them to act on this advice
  - questioning in lessons builds on students' responses so that it probes and extends their thinking
  - the right support is given rapidly to those students in danger of underachieving, especially those supported by the pupil premium funding.
- Ensure that leaders accelerate the pace of improvements by
  - sharpening the analysis of the achievement of different groups of students to give a more realistic self-evaluation of the school's overall performance
  - making sure that all subject leaders take direct responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and by holding teams to account for the progress of the students in their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average, although there are few students who attained highly at Key Stage 2. From this starting point students attain GCSE examination results that are broadly average overall and rising faster than the national trend. The proportion of students gaining the highest A\* and A grades in most subjects, however, is below average.
- The progress of most groups of students, including those from ethnic minority groups, requires improvement because, over time, there has been underachievement by some groups of students and in specific subjects. In 2012, while the proportion of students making the expected progress in English was similar to the national picture, the corresponding figure in mathematics was much lower. Few students made progress that exceeded national expectations. GCSE results improved considerably in 2013. In English, 64% of students gained grades A\*-C and in mathematics 74% did so. The progress students made in these two subjects was close to that seen nationally.
- Students supported by the pupil premium attain, on average, a grade-and-a-half lower than their classmates in English and in mathematics. This gap is closing and is now similar to that seen nationally as the result of effective use of additional funding to help eligible students through one-to-one tuition and extra staffing on targeted classes. There is a closing gap between the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium funding and others in Year 11.

In Years 7-10, too, a wide gap remains between students supported by the pupil premium and others, reflecting their slower progress than others in recent years. School data and inspection evidence shows that the gap is now closing quickly.

- Those students pursuing specialist work-related course options with other providers make good progress. The school has made the right decision to no longer enter students early for English and mathematics at GCSE level.
- Some disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making accelerated progress as a result of the extra help they receive. However, there are occasions when work is not adjusted in lessons and these students find it too difficult so they do not make as much progress as they could.
- Students learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers because of the very precise and often effective support they receive, both in class and in small groups.
- Students eligible for support from the Year 7 catch-up premium have been given additional literacy support and help with reading. These students are making good progress.
- Achievement in lessons is variable. Students make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress in those lessons where expectations and challenge are high and work is adapted to meet the needs of students of different abilities. In some lessons seen during the inspection, this was not the case and progress was no better than adequate.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. In 2013, AS and A-level students attained broadly average grades and most made the progress expected of them in most subjects, although few made better than expected progress. Inspection evidence suggests that

current students are making better progress but this has yet to be established as a clear pattern over time.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- While there is an increasing proportion of good and outstanding practice, teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent across the school. Too many lessons do not help students make good progress.
- Some teachers expect too little of their students, both in terms of work-rate and intellectual demand. In these weaker lessons, teaching is slow and uninteresting and includes undemanding activities.
- Teachers sometimes give the same work to everyone. This results in some students, especially the more-able, completing tasks quickly and then sitting idly whilst they wait for others to catch up. In some lessons, too, students listen to the teacher for too long without being actively involved. On occasion, lower attaining students are not well provided for.
- Teachers do not always use questions as well as they could in lessons to deepen their learning. Many teachers take care to check that students have understood an idea by asking individuals precise and often quite probing questions that encourage them to think deeply. This is not always the case and some teachers still rely on volunteers putting up their hands rather than targeting questions to individual students. This makes it easy for some students not to participate in question-and-answer sessions.
- Teachers' marking across the school is accurate and precise but it does not always show students what they need to do to improve; some teachers do not check that students have acted on this advice.
- Examples of outstanding teaching included a Year 8 science lesson where students worked with energy and excitement as they cooperated in groups to investigate the friction characteristics of different properties. They confidently presented their research finding to the class, who, guided expertly by the class teacher, asked perceptive questions of those making the presentations.
- There are also examples of strong teaching in the sixth form, such as a Year 13 history lesson. Following a high-powered class discussion and debate, students made rapid gains in their knowledge of liberalism and in their skills of evaluation and analysis, making thoughtful presentations to their peers. The teacher got the very best out of students by asking open questions that prompted all to think deeply about their work. Over time, however, teaching in the sixth form has not been strong enough in all subjects for students to make good progress.
- Carefully targeted support is helping disabled students and those with special educational needs to catch up with their peers. Teaching assistants often make a good contribution to their support, both in lessons and in work with individuals.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- While most students are cooperative in lessons, a minority lack the drive and enthusiasm needed to do their very best.
- Students behave well around the school; they move calmly between lessons and make good use

of social spaces. They are polite and courteous and show respect to each other and to the adults who work with them.

- The number of exclusions from the school is now below average and staff have successfully reduced the number of incidents of poor behaviour that require intervention. However, a small minority of students occasionally misbehave, which spoils the learning and enjoyment of others. This is particularly so when teaching lacks imagination and tasks are dull and repetitive.
- Students feel safe at Kings Norton Boys. They know about the different forms of bullying and say that bullying rarely takes place. They know who to turn to if they feel vulnerable or if other students make them unhappy.
- Attendance has improved considerably over the past two years and is now just above the national average. There is now little difference in the attendance of different groups of students and the proportion of students absent for more than one day per week has also decreased significantly. This is the result of concerted efforts by the school. The school monitors the progress of students attending off-site courses to ensure they attend regularly.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement as teaching and achievement are not yet consistently good. Leaders have not been active enough in checking on those groups of students who could be doing better, particularly those supported by the pupil premium and those who need additional help.
- The way that the school checks its performance requires improvement. The school's self-evaluation has been over-optimistic and has judged students' progress to be good when the evidence over time does not support this. The senior leadership's analysis of school information has put too much reliance on recent improvements in the school rather than gauging performance over time. Their analysis did not question deeply enough the differences between the achievement of groups of students.
- The leadership of the sixth form requires improvement as there is too much variation between subjects and teaching has not been consistently good over time.
- Some subject leaders and those responsible for groups of students, including the sixth form, do not use information on the progress that different groups of students make rigorously enough to identify when they need to step in quickly to organise additional support when any student shows signs of slipping behind.
- The impact of the work of the strong and vigorous new leadership team over the last two years is evident in improvements across the school. Examination results in 2013 showed a big improvement over those in previous years. The headteacher engenders loyalty amongst staff, who are working with clarity and enthusiasm in aiming to meet the school's high expectations for students' success.
- The headteacher has ensured that all staff, leaders, and governors now have a thorough understanding of what needs to be done to improve. This, together with better teaching and improved progress in key subjects such as mathematics and English, demonstrates the school's capacity to improve further.

- Good systems are now in place to monitor the quality of lessons and the overall progress of students. Clear feedback, coupled with appropriate advice and training, is offered to teachers whose performance falls short of the mark. However, some subject leaders do not always follow up these shortcomings with sufficient urgency, so that the improvement in teaching is not as rapid as it could be.
- Systems for setting targets for teachers to improve their work are now being used rigorously to reward good performance and are based on an accurate review of teaching and progress.
- The local authority keeps a close check on the performance of the school and has provided a balance of challenge and support to help the school improve.
- The curriculum supports students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and there is a strong emphasis on securing improvements in students' literacy skills. A range of vocational courses meets the students' needs well.
- Arrangements for ensuring that students stay safe meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have studied the published performance information on the school, but along with senior leaders, have an over-inflated view of how well the school is doing compared with other schools nationally. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and where performance is less strong. They sign off pay awards for staff who meet their targets and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled. They know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and the difference this is making, although they realise there is more to do. Governors attend courses and share what they learn with all other members of the governing body. Governors have links with subject areas and visit to see for themselves what is happening in the school.

## 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>	103562
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	427037

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	730
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	140
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clive Sentance
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 6280010
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 6280080
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@kingsnortonboys.bham.sch.uk

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