

# Lode Heath School

Lode Lane, Solihull, B91 2HW

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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' attainment in many subjects is above national averages. It is particularly strong in mathematics as a result of consistently good and often outstanding teaching in this subject.
- The number of students making and exceeding expected progress compares well with national averages, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Students who are eligible for additional government funding are making rapid progress and, as a result, gaps in attainment and progress are closing.
- Teachers generally plan lessons that have the level of challenge to ensure that students make good or better progress.
- Students' behaviour is good and this contributes well to their learning.
- The school does a good job of keeping students safe.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have ensured that the quality of teaching continues to improve and that high standards are being maintained.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, students do not make enough progress because the work they are given is too hard or too easy for them.
- Students' targets are sometimes too easy to achieve and, as a result, students are unsure about what they should be aiming for.
- Teachers do not consistently give students precise feedback that helps them to improve their work. They do not check that their advice has been followed.
- The school does not check well enough that the support offered to some students with behavioural needs is effective.
- Leaders and managers do not spot some pockets of lower achievement because assessment information is recorded differently in different subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks and listened to students reading.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, representatives from the governing body and school staff, including subject and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including minutes of governors’ meetings; performance management documentation; records relating to attendance, behaviour and the monitoring of the quality of teaching; the school’s own evaluation of its performance and improvement plans; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ann Andersen	Additional Inspector
Steven Cartlidge	Additional Inspector
Anna Fisher	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized secondary school.
- Lode Heath School converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, Lode Heath School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students identified as speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care, and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is broadly in line with the national average but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not currently use alternative off-site provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has been awarded the International School Award 2011-2014.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in January 2014.

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

- Increase students' progress further in order to raise their attainment to even higher levels by:
  - using information about what students can and cannot do to set work in lessons that stretches all students, and particularly the most able
  - making sure that students understand the targets they are given, and that these are challenging enough for all students
  - consistently giving students feedback that helps them to improve their work and then checking that they follow the advice they are given.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of actions taken to support students identified as having behavioural needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders' monitoring of students' progress by ensuring that procedures to record assessment information are consistent throughout the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Examination results at the end of Year 11 have been high for a number of years, although the proportion of students attaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics dipped in 2012 as a result of some poor results in English. In 2013, the proportion increased again to be well above the national average.
- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics is particularly strong as a result of consistently good and often outstanding teaching that ensures that students develop confidence in applying their learning and solving problems. Progress in almost every other subject is good. Progress in history was slower in 2013 but is now improving as a result of new subject leadership and better teaching. Progress in some subjects in Year 9 is slower than in other years.
- Early entry to GCSE examinations has been used in the past in mathematics and is being used this year in English. The school's stated policy and practice indicate that students are not disadvantaged and are encouraged to reach their full potential in both subjects. This is supported by the available data, which indicates that most students make expected progress and better than expected progress in mathematics and this year in English too. When students complete courses early, they take AS-level bridging courses to support their preparation for post-16 study.
- The progress of students from different groups is generally good. In 2013, the results of students who are eligible for pupil premium funding were about two thirds of a grade lower than others in the year in both English and mathematics. Eligible students currently in Year 11 are making rapid progress. As a result, the gap in attainment with other students is closing in both English and mathematics. Following their early entry to GCSE in English in the current Year 11, 75% of students eligible for pupil premium have already achieved an A\* to C grade, which matches the proportion of other students. The government funding for these students is used effectively, starting in Key Stage 3, to provide small-group teaching and one-to-one support.
- The most-able students are not always challenged enough. As a result, they make less progress than other ability groups in some subjects and do not reach the very highest grades.
- Students supported through the Year 7 'catch-up' funding (additional funds for students who did not reach Level 4 in English or mathematics in primary school) make good progress as a result of one-to-one mentoring in literacy and numeracy.
- Those students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good teaching they receive and the well-planned and targeted support of other adults. The school has a relatively high number of students identified as having behavioural needs. Their needs are identified accurately and there is a clear record of improving behaviour over time. However, the impact of actions taken to support this group of students is not evaluated effectively so that students continue to receive support when they may no longer need it.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is leading to good overall progress. Teachers have very positive relationships with students and establish effective classroom routines that ensure students get a lot of work done

in lessons.

- Teaching in mathematics is consistently good and often outstanding. Teachers have high expectations, give clear and concise explanations, including demonstrating how to do things, and they ask questions that challenge and deepen understanding so that students make rapid and sustained progress.
- Students are often asked to 'become the teacher' in their lessons and to lead learning for other students. This challenges them to reshape their understanding for an audience and to lay out their ideas in simple, clear patterns that allow the teacher to assess their learning.
- Students are asked to evaluate their learning against clear objectives. As a result, they were able to talk with pride and enthusiasm about how all their learning fitted together.
- Teachers mostly set work that is well matched to students' different abilities and which helps them to build on what they have learnt before. In some lessons, however, the tasks given to students were too easy, and so they make less progress.
- Students have targets for each subject and, in most cases, know how to reach them. However, not all understand their targets. Some students have already reached their target and are at a loss as to how to proceed or what they should be aiming for. Some of the targets set are not challenging enough.
- Teachers mark students work frequently and thoroughly, and some teachers give precise feedback which leaves students in no doubt as to how to improve their work, by either correcting problems or attempting more challenging tasks set in the marking. However, this is not a consistent feature of the marking and feedback that students receive across the school. Even when teachers do give clear guidance in their marking, they do not always check that students have followed their advice in order to improve their work.

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

- The behaviour of students is good. Students' attitudes to learning are consistently positive in class, whether working individually, in pairs or in groups. All students arrive properly equipped for lessons, and are ready and eager to learn.
- Students' good behaviour and good relationships with their teachers contribute well to their learning. They are up for a challenge and tell inspectors they enjoy lessons where they are active and working on their own initiative. Students were very positive about the school in conversation with inspectors and the school's own 'student voice' surveys confirm this observation.
- The school keeps thorough records of behaviour incidents so that patterns can be analysed. These show an improving picture over time, with reductions in exclusions over time. The logs also show that Year 9 students are more likely to be involved in disruptive incidents than other students. The school is using this information to target its resources and pastoral team on improving behaviour in this year group.
- Students are proud of their school and wear their uniform with pride. Inspectors noted some lateness at the start of the day and into assemblies, but punctuality to lessons is good. Attendance was above the national average in 2012-13 and has improved in the current academic year. The work of the new pastoral support team has resulted in improvements in the

way the school works with families and a reduction in the number of students who miss school repeatedly.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All safeguarding and child protection policies and practice meet requirements.
- Students have a good understanding of all different types of bullying as a result of lessons that target these issues in the curriculum. A group of Year 11 students said that bullying is not an issue at the school, while younger students said that, on the rare occasion where it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Students also said that the use of homophobic language is rare and that students knew it would be dealt with robustly.
- The curriculum supports students in developing their ability to keep themselves and others safe. Lessons and themed days ensure that students are taught to assess risk in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Year 11 students spent a day with the mother of a gang-killing victim and were able to talk about what they had learnt about safety and gang culture.

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

- The new headteacher and his senior leadership team provide good leadership and have established effective procedures to hold staff to account and improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and managers, supported by the governing body, have secured high levels of attainment and ensured that, where there is a fall off in attainment or progress, this is made the focus of attention and improves rapidly as a result.
- Subject leaders are well focused in the use of data to track students' progress and put in place effective extra help to move students forward. They check on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility and hold staff to account for the performance of their students. While these procedures are effective in each department, the way assessment data is collated and used is not consistent across the school. This means that senior leaders cannot always make comparisons between the performance of different subjects.
- Checks on the quality of teaching by senior leaders are carried out regularly and provide staff with clear feedback about how they can improve their practice. Where weaker teaching is identified, staff are provided with support to improve, including working in groups of three to share good practice and observe and plan together. These interventions are proving successful in improving the quality of teaching.
- The management of teachers' performance is rigorous. Targets for improvement ensure that teachers are held to account for the quality of their teaching and for students' results. Pay progression is linked to the successful achievement of these targets. Similarly, subject leaders and other staff with wider responsibilities have targets related to these roles, which are monitored carefully.
- The leadership and management of the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is generally good. Teaching assistants are trained well and deployed where they are most needed, resulting in good progress for targeted students. The impact of the provision for students with behavioural, emotional and social needs is not monitored and evaluated well enough, with the result that some students receive extra help that they may no longer need.

- The curriculum offers a wide range of subjects that provide rich learning experiences in both key stages. The 'pathways' offered to students as they enter Year 9 ensure that students' needs and interests are met through an appropriate range of GCSEs as well as subjects that develop wider skills effectively. The ASDAN pathway ensures that students are also accredited for developing personal skills like organisation and contributions to the community.
- The school works in partnership with many agencies to broaden students' experience through, for example, 'immersion days' looking at the dangers of gang culture and parenting skills. Visits to a Senegal sports college and trips to Europe improve students' understanding of different cultures. There are also a wide variety of extra-curricular activities that promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works well with parents and ensures that they can play a full part in their children's education. High attendance rates at parents' evenings and the school's online assessment tracker ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress. Links with local churches are strong and one such link supports parents by providing mentoring. The school also helps parents to access academic qualifications where appropriate.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged students and those who need to catch up after leaving primary school is deployed effectively so that these students make good progress and close the gaps in attainment and progress with other students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because members take a keen interest in, and understand, the school's performance data. Governors visit the school regularly to discuss with subject leaders progress towards agreed improvements. They then report back to the full governing body to keep them fully informed. Governors know how teaching is being improved and they support the headteacher in making sure that performance management is rigorous. They are also fully involved in decisions on salary progression and promotion; linking both to the quality of teaching. Governors work to ensure that the school works with and engages parents in their children's learning. The governing body has a tight grip on the school budget and ensures that the additional funding the school receives through the pupil premium and the Year 7 'catch-up' premium are having a positive impact on students' achievement.

## 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>	137008
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	440672

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>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1049
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Allsopp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 704 1421
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