

# Aston Fields Middle School

Drummond Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2ET

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Students make outstanding progress from their average starting points on entry to the school. Their attainment is well above average when they move on to high school.
- Achievement is outstanding in both English and mathematics, and strong in other subjects as well.
- Support provided for disabled students and those with special educational needs is very effective and enables them to make rapid progress.
- Pupil premium funds are used consistently well to help eligible pupils achieve as well as, and often better than, their peers.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and have high expectations of their students. Teaching is consistently outstanding in English and mathematics. It is strong and improving across a range of subjects.
- School leaders have implemented very effective literacy and numeracy policies which have contributed to the high levels of attainment in English and mathematics.
- Relationships between adults and students are excellent and contribute significantly to the students' success.
- Attendance has risen over recent years and is now well above the national average.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Students enjoy attending the school and are full of enthusiasm for their learning.
- Students feel safe and are very positive about their school. They are polite and respectful towards others. Conduct in lessons and around the school is impeccable.
- The quality of teaching and learning is checked rigorously and developed very effectively by all leaders.
- Robust and effective systems capture reliable information about the progress of students. Teachers quickly identify pupils experiencing difficulties and support them to make rapid progress.
- The headteacher leads the school with great diligence and determination. He is passionate and fully committed to serving the needs of his learning community.
- Governors hold the school to account and strive for excellence. Since the previous inspection, they have relentlessly pursued their aims of achieving an outstanding education for all.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons, tutorial sessions and assemblies.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and managers, and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with three groups of students, representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- A meeting was held with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- The inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 47 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents, and consideration was given to the views expressed by students and their families in response to the school's own survey.

## Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Balbir Kaur-Pierpoint

Additional Inspector

Graham Crerar

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This middle-deemed secondary school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students come from White British backgrounds. The number of students from other ethnic backgrounds is very small with approximately one per cent of the students speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This additional funding supports students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- An average proportion of students with disabilities and special educational needs are supported through school action.
- The proportion of these students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is higher than average. Many of these students have moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties or other specific needs.
- Over twenty students benefit from the Y7 funded catch-up programme.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Embed the high quality of feedback and guidance given to students on how to improve in all subjects, so that it matches the best in the school, as exemplified in English, mathematics and science.

## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** is outstanding

- The work of students shows that they achieve exceptionally well in all year groups and make outstanding progress from their starting points to the time they leave the school.
- Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science and rising. All groups, especially the more-able students, achieve extremely well within these subjects. This was because teachers provide individualised, tailored programmes to support students to secure faster progress.
- Student's achievement is good and improving in other subjects including history, geography, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, and modern foreign languages. Standards in art and music are high and rising further as students benefit from the good work of teachers.
- The progress of students eligible for additional funding is rapid in both English and mathematics. Extra help is provided through one-to-one tuition, in class support and the employment of additional teachers has reduced the attainment gap between these students and others across all years. Consequently, students receiving additional support achieve as well as and sometimes better than their peers. In 2013 in Year 6, these students did as well as others in mathematics, reading, and writing.
- Literacy is promoted well across the school. Reading is encouraged throughout the school and literacy skills are developed in many subjects. Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used effectively to support weak readers and help them to improve their reading skills so that they are able to keep up with their classmates in lessons.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress. This is because teaching is closely matched to their learning and teaching assistants provide high quality support that contributes to their success.
- Students in Years 5 and 6 make at least good and often outstanding progress in their studies. This is because of the successful work done in partnership with the first schools. Good planning supports the seamless transition of students into the school. The curriculum is designed to link with prior learning, and work done with Year 4 teachers is continued with Year 5 teachers. As a result students learn quickly and achieve standards in Year 6 well above average.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teaching across most subjects and topics leads to outstanding outcomes for most students. This is especially true in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers are well qualified and use their strong subject knowledge to make learning enjoyable and challenging. They are enthusiastic and readily motivate their students to learn. They have very high expectations of students and this drives achievement, especially of the most able. As a result, teaching leads to all students making good, and often outstanding, progress.
- Available information about students is used effectively to plan lessons that are exciting and interesting. Teachers make learning interesting and meaningful. Where learning is most effective and progress rapid, the teacher's ambitions for all students are evident. Teachers are most skilled in adapting questions to develop learning for students of different abilities.

- Students are clear about their target grades and know what they need to do to achieve them. Encouragingly, the vast majority of students are ambitious for themselves and many want to exceed their targets. Students praise their teachers and said that they worked hard because the teachers respected and work hard for them.
- Students welcome the chance to work with each other. In one science lesson, for example, students were challenged to diagnose injuries of patients admitted to an accident and emergency ward and required to suggest possible actions. They commented on the work of others, welcomed the chance to make corrections and could describe the next steps they must take to improve their work.
- Teachers' marking is frequent and regular. Students make most rapid progress where the teacher checks that they act on the advice given and have understood the changes they have made. Teachers' marking and feedback is best in English, mathematics and science, but is less effective in helping pupils to improve in other subjects.
- Students at risk of falling behind receive support both in and out of lessons. Teachers plan activities to better meet their needs and work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that these students achieve well.
- The regular setting of homework, linked to classwork, is promoting good and better learning.

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

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are highly motivated in lessons and involve themselves in the full range of school activities both during and after school.
- Students exhibit tremendous respect for one another in lessons. This is because staff model and consistently promote respectful behaviours throughout the school. Students feel extremely safe in their school.
- Social skills are very well developed and students work very successfully together. For example, they provide helpful, informative feedback to each other about work in both an honest and sensitive way that promotes outstanding progress.
- Incidents of disruption in the classroom are extremely rare. This is because teachers have high expectations for the behaviour of students and students have high expectations of themselves and others. Praise and encouragement are used consistently well.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students receive regular teaching about how to use the internet safely. This has been further reinforced by talks given by teachers and external speakers, including the police, in assemblies.
- Parents and staff strongly agree with students that this is a safe school and incidents of bullying are very rare. Students are aware of the different forms of bullying, including homophobic, racist and cyber-bullying. They say that the school promotes tolerance and understanding for others, but equally express great confidence that teachers will deal with reported bullying well.
- Fixed-term exclusions are well below national averages and attendance figures are well above

national averages and still rising. Incidents of lateness to school or lessons are extremely rare.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. He has successfully galvanised all staff as they strive for excellence, promote learning for life and maintain outstanding achievement for all at the school. He is supported by a very able leadership team who work effectively to sustain and further improve the already high standards within the school.
- There is a strong staff team with a shared sense of purpose and direction. Staff are united in their view that improving the school for the benefit of students is at the core of their work.
- Central to the school's success is the setting of ambitious and aspirational targets for students within a caring and supportive setting. Leaders set the bar high and both staff and students strive to achieve these high expectations.
- The management of teacher's work is robust and is seen to be fair. The system is underpinned by high quality training. Teachers' pay rewards are linked closely to the progress of their pupils. Teachers new to the school are full of praise for the support they have received to enable to settle into the school community quickly and help students to achieve well.
- The curriculum promotes equality of opportunity extremely well because it is designed to cater for the needs and interests of all students. Literacy and numeracy teaching has been enhanced, with additional time built into the week for some students to improve their skills in these areas. The tutorial system promotes students' spiritual, moral and social development well. Students very much appreciate the wide range of additional activities offered to them on a weekly basis.
- Partnerships with local schools are very strong and enhance students' creative and sporting skills and development. The primary sports funding is used very effectively to develop staff expertise, employ external coaches to deliver programmes and widen pupils' participation in physical activities, leading to better fitness.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are realistic and focus strongly on continuing to improve teaching and raise the achievement of all groups to the highest levels in all aspects of the school's work.
- The local authority confirms the leaders' views of their high performance in the school and this confidence has resulted in the local authority adopting an appropriate light touch approach. Staff and parents strongly support the leadership of the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body have high aspirations for both their staff and students. Governors possess a strong set of skills and knowledge which have helped them improve accountability and drive up standards since the last inspection.
  - Governors review their own effectiveness annually. Following an evaluation of their work they implemented an action plan to strengthen their role in challenging and supporting the school. Relevant training enhanced their abilities to hold school leaders more fully to account and ensure standards continued to rise within the school.

- The headteacher’s performance is managed effectively and ambitious targets are set every year. He is held rigorously to account for the school’s work through robust performance meetings with governors.
- Governors have a very thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school and have worked closely with the headteacher and staff to develop the school’s performance management of teachers. Successful pay progression is now clearly linked with the Teacher Standards and especially to the achievement of students.
- The governing body keep a firm grasp on the financial oversight of the school’s budget. They are kept informed of how pupil premium and catch-up government funding is spent and can clearly describe the real and positive impact of this funding.
- Governors use data about the school to inform themselves of the impact of teachers’ work on how well students achieve. As a result, they play a crucial role in the school’s success and they strive to secure outstanding outcomes for all its students at all times.

## 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>	116957
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443993

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9-13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	553
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jean Richardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Cox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 876026
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