

Cockburn School

Parkside, Gipsy Lane, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS11 5TT

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From very low starting points, students make similar progress in English and mathematics to that seen nationally. They develop literacy and numeracy skills quickly because there is good provision in place to help students catch up.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and their peers has narrowed considerably in 2014.
- Students benefit from good teaching that, in most cases, is carefully tailored to meet their individual needs. Teachers have high expectations, and plan lessons that deepen students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning. Many display real enjoyment and a thirst for knowledge. Attendance has risen steadily since the last inspection, reflecting the highly positive educational experience the school provides.
- Arrangements to keep students safe are strong. Staff are well trained and adept at identifying students at risk of harm.
- The headteacher's programme of 'Transformation to Excellence' has had a powerful impact. The improvements in the school are strongly supported by parents and the community, reflected in the rising number of applications for places.
- Leaders and managers instil in students a 'can do' attitude and a belief that they can be successful. There is a strong sense of moral purpose, widely shared across the staff, that underpins the school's work to address barriers caused by disadvantage.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough students make good progress in English and mathematics. Unvalidated examination results for 2014 indicate some improvement from 2013 in mathematics, but a decline in English.
- Some teaching does not lead to rapid progress because it is not tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of the most and least able students.
- Some aspects of the school's self-evaluation have been over-generous because insufficient weight has been given to the progress students make, over time, in English and mathematics.
- Systems for managing the performance of staff are not fully consistent. Some teachers' objectives are too vague and difficult to measure easily.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at no notice under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It was subsequently deemed a section 5 inspection in order to ensure the inspection team gathered sufficient evaluative information to secure judgements.
- Inspectors observed 43 part-lessons, eight of which were undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited some lessons for short periods and observed the behaviour and conduct of students in and around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and a group of teachers. Further meetings were held with members of the governing body, local authority representatives and an external consultant that supports the school.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons and at various times during each day. They also spoke formally to groups of students on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including attendance, exclusion and behaviour information, quality assurance checks on the quality of teaching, performance management information, reports to governors and minutes of governing body meetings. They reviewed a number of case studies and a range of policies, including those aimed at keeping students safe.
- Inspectors took account of the 76 responses to online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspection team also took account of 112 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Goldsmith	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cockburn is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or that speaks English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with an education, health and care plan is average.
- A number of students attend alternative provision on a part-time or full-time basis. The school uses a limited number of alternative providers including Southway, Gipton Fire Station, Hunslet Boys and Girls Club and Footsteps.
- The school exceeds the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4
- The school is part of the Learning Trust (South Leeds), which was formed in July 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the quality of teaching, in order to further accelerate progress, by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently plan and deliver lessons that are tailored to meet the different needs of students in each class
 - ensuring feedback to students is frequent and that teachers' comments specifically guide students in how to improve their work.
- Further raise achievement of disadvantaged students so that gaps between their achievement and that of other students nationally continue to narrow, by:
 - supporting all teachers to use information they hold on disadvantaged students to skilfully tailor teaching to their needs.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - refining self-evaluation by placing more weight on the progress students make over time
 - sharpening teachers' performance management objectives so that they are clear, consistent and measurable.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's leadership is underpinned by a strong moral purpose. He has a passionate determination to overcome barriers caused by disadvantage and to ensure all students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. His 'Transformation to Excellence' programme has delivered wide-ranging improvements. As a consequence, the school is now heavily over-subscribed reflecting the high regard in which it is held by many parents. Parents, students and staff told inspectors they feel the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders, including members of the governing body, are highly ambitious for the school. While aspects of their work are of the highest quality, leadership and management are not outstanding overall because the highest levels of achievement have yet to be secured. In addition, some aspects of self-evaluation have been over-generous because leaders have not given sufficient weight to students' progress over time in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers have focused relentlessly on improving teaching and have well-developed systems to check on its quality. Teachers, at all stages of their career, receive good training and development to help them be effective in their role. Teachers are observed regularly and receive insightful feedback that helps them to improve their practice. The best teachers are rewarded for their efforts, although the performance management process is not sufficiently searching to ensure teachers are equally challenged.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Over recent years the school has reduced the number of vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and adopted a more academic offer. Unvalidated examination results for 2014 indicate that students' attainment on GCSE courses is rising. The school prepares students for life in modern Britain effectively. Students are respectful of one another and take great pride in maintaining the positive ethos that permeates the school.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural needs are well met. The school recently led a commemoration service for those lost in the First World War, which involved many members of the local community. Students, staff and governors also spoke passionately to inspectors about their work to raise funds for a charity established following the death of a student from the school last year.
- The local authority provides minimal support to the school. The school is part of a teaching alliance and several members of staff regularly share their expertise through partnerships with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body share the headteacher's drive and passion to tackle barriers caused by disadvantage. The majority of students in the school are eligible for the pupil premium, and governors have ensured the funding is well used to meet students' needs. As a result, gaps in achievement are narrowing.
 - Governors rigorously fulfil their statutory duties in regard to safeguarding. In addition, they ensure essential policies and reports are available on the school website, such as those pertaining to the curriculum, child protection and special educational needs.
 - Governors receive good quality information about students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection their challenge of senior leaders has contributed to the eradication of any inadequate teaching and has led to improved performance in subject areas where they had concerns.
 - Governors are well informed about the curriculum. They have ensured fundamental British values are actively promoted and that students develop tolerance and respect, and participate in the local community.
 - The school's finances are well managed and available resources are employed effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. There is a tangible ethos across the school centred on the 'Cockburn values'. Staff and students share a keen sense of responsibility to ensure there is a positive climate in which everyone can learn and develop.
- Students really enjoy learning and many display a thirst for knowledge. Their attitudes to learning are very positive and most are keen to participate actively in lessons. Inspectors saw no disruptive behaviour in class or at social times around the school.
- The school site is immaculate. There is no litter and no graffiti. Students are very proud of their school and students told inspectors how much behaviour had improved over recent years. Students are smart,

courteous and polite. Parents, staff and students are unreservedly positive about the quality of behaviour.

- Personal, social and health education, religious education, assemblies and drop-down days are used to ensure students are well informed about social, moral, cultural and spiritual issues. A strong sense of tolerance and respect is promoted and practiced. The curriculum ensures students learn about democracy, the legal system and other fundamental values that underpin life in Britain.
- Students are fully aware of different forms of bullying and know what action to take if they have any worries. Incidents of bullying, including those of a racial or homophobic nature are rare. When bullying does occur, the school takes swift action and uses restorative practices to tackle issues head-on. Consequently, incidents of repeated bullying are extremely rare.
- Overall attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection and is now above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged students is also above that seen nationally. Students are punctual on arrival at school in the morning and move around the school sensibly in order to get to lessons on time.
- The school operates a highly effective inclusion room. The use of the facility has contributed to a reduction in fixed-term exclusions. There are no permanent exclusions.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Very rigorous checks are made when appointing staff and arranging visitors, such as guest speakers, to the school. The single central record is meticulously maintained. Members of staff in the care, support and guidance team are highly trained in child protection. All other staff are also well trained and thoroughly understand and apply the school's child protection policy. Over the last year, members of staff have recognised the signs of radicalisation and sexual exploitation, and effective steps to ensure appropriate actions to protect students have been taken. All students, including those that attend alternative provision, are contacted on the first day of absence to check their whereabouts.
- A police officer works in the school on a full-time basis as a member of the care, support and guidance team. She provides highly effective support for students, helping them to recognise risk and liaising closely with the local community.
- Inspectors observed an assembly on the theme of e-safety, and looked at work led by the IT (information technology) department designed to help students stay safe when online. Students told inspectors they feel very well informed on the risks posed when online and know how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good. It is not outstanding because, over time, teaching has not resulted in outstanding achievement.
- Teachers hold high expectations of students. They know their students very well because good systems allow them to share information about the particular learning preferences of each student. Some teachers use this information skilfully to plan lessons, group students and target their questioning, resulting in more rapid progress. However, some teachers are less skilled in this approach and do not tailor learning activities as effectively, so some students, including disadvantaged students, are less engaged and make slower progress.
- The school's work to develop the professional skills of teachers is of high quality, and consequently the standard of teaching has become more consistent. Weaker teaching has been successfully tackled and the school's own quality assurance work shows there is an increasing proportion of good or better teaching.
- Teachers employ a wide range of strategies to involve and engage students, contributing to their good progress and enjoyment. Most lessons move at a lively pace.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics have put in place effective approaches to developing the subject-specific teaching skills of their colleagues. Teachers regularly plan together. In the mathematics department, for example, teachers have developed a consistent approach to the teaching of calculation.
- Assessment is regular and data on students' progress is systematically analysed. Students making slower progress are identified and receive a wide range of additional support. In many subjects books are marked well, although some books are not marked frequently enough and some comments are not sufficiently specific to help students to improve.
- There are frequent opportunities in lessons for students to read and to apply their wider literacy skills. Most teachers use questioning effectively to stimulate debate and discussion, although some students' oral contributions could be developed further. The quality of students' written work is good because teachers have high expectations for presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teaching assistants are carefully deployed and are skilled in supporting and challenging the less able students. They understand when to intervene and when to allow students to work independently with problems and find their own solutions.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Unvalidated examination results for 2014 indicate attainment at the key measure of five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics has begun to rise again following an anticipated dip in 2013 that reflected the particularly low levels of attainment on entry to the school of that cohort.
- From significantly low starting points, students make similar progress in English and mathematics to that seen nationally. The school has good provision across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for those students entering the school with low attainment in English and mathematics. Consequently, most make at least expected progress, with many making accelerated progress, which helps them to catch-up with other students.
- Analysis of the 2014 examination results shows that gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers in the school are closing. These gaps had previously been wide. The school's extensive efforts to ensure disadvantaged students receive the additional support they need have established a clear trend of improvement. Disadvantaged students attain around half a GCSE grade less than their peers. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged students in the school is well below that of other students nationally, and remains a priority for improvement.
- In the past the school entered some students early for GCSE examinations. Far fewer students are now entered early and only when the school is convinced it is in the best interests of the student.
- Few students enter the school with high levels of attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Those that do usually make similar progress to high-attaining students nationally.
- Students acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly across a wide range of subjects. Reading is well supported and students speak enthusiastically about studying a wide range of texts. Teaching within English and mathematics has a strong emphasis on skill development and well-planned opportunities across other subjects allow students to use and apply literacy and numeracy skills.
- The achievement of students who attend alternative provision is carefully monitored by the school. All students, regardless of the bespoke provision they receive, study and achieve qualifications in English and mathematics. A wide range of vocational qualifications is available to meet varied interests and aptitudes. For example, last year 14 students attained a fire-fighting qualification.
- Students with special educational needs receive good support in class and make similar progress to other students 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

Unique reference number	108065
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	452327

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Westwell
Headteacher	David Gurney
Date of previous school inspection	15-16 November 2013
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