

Lordswood Boys' School

Hagley Road, Birmingham, B17 8BJ

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Since becoming an academy, leaders, including governors, have not demonstrated the capacity to improve achievement or teaching.
- In the last two years, students' attainment and levels of progress have fallen to far below national averages, especially in English and mathematics.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, and other groups have widened.
- Teachers' expectations are too low; so many students make little or no progress.
- Leaders do not check the progress of groups well enough, so there is wide variation in the progress of students from different minority ethnic groups.
- Behaviour is inadequate due to persistent low level disruption in lessons. Many students show a reluctance to learn.
- Students' safety has at times been compromised by unclear communication and a lack of rigorous procedures regarding risk assessment.
- Marking is often insufficiently detailed and teachers are not clear about how well students are doing. Senior leaders, including governors, do not have reliable information about students' progress.
- The most-able students are given work that is too easy, so they rarely achieve the highest grades in GCSE examinations.
- Until recently, several courses did not adequately prepare students for their future education and employment.
- The school fails to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Many students lack the confidence to contribute to discussions or participate fully in the life of the school.
- School leaders lack rigour in checking teaching and putting plans to improve into action. Policies to support literacy and numeracy are not consistently applied by subject leaders and teachers.
- Governors do not take enough account of parents' views of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has been successful in reducing the number of exclusions.
- The school recovery programme has been used effectively in some cases to improve attendance and help the least able students to begin to catch up with the others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, 14 of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team looked at students' work in their books.
- There were meetings with groups of students, senior leaders and members of the governing body. An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire Parent view to generate a report. Inspectors considered the 32 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own information on students' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Lordswood Boys' School converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2013. When its predecessor school, Lordswood Boys' School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be requiring improvement.
- Lordswood Boys' School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly of Pakistani, Indian and Black heritage. Nearly a half of the students have English as an additional language and a very small minority are at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of disadvantaged students who are supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through a statement of special educational need is average. A small number of students have an education, health or care plan.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school receives support from Lordswood Girls' School, its partner school within the Lordswood Academies Trust. References to the headteacher are about the executive headteacher, who currently supervises both schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics, and thereby raise students' attainment and accelerate their progress, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all students, and particularly the most able, are capable of achieving
 - ensuring teachers provide all students with activities that are appropriately challenging
 - making sure that in all subjects, consistent clear advice is given to students about how to improve their work
 - diligently checking the progress of all groups of students, and especially those from minority ethnic groups, across the range of subjects
 - encouraging students to be confident in classroom discussion and to think more deeply when responding to questions
 - ensuring that, in all lessons, poor behaviour does not impede learning insisting that all teachers understand and effectively use systems for tracking the progress of students so that leaders at all levels have accurate information regarding students' progress
 - making sure that the teaching of writing and number skills is secure making better use of pupil premium funds to close the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and others.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring all leaders and managers swiftly and effectively put agreed plans and policies into action
 - giving a high and urgent priority to implementing the school's programme for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - creating a clear, well understood and competently managed system for gathering and analysing information about students' progress

- making sure that senior and subject leaders are equally rigorous in monitoring teaching and learning and challenging teachers about the performance of different groups of students, particularly disadvantaged students
- providing students with the opportunities when they leave to follow a range of appropriate pathways into education, training and employment
- ensuring that all governors have a thorough and detailed understanding of information about how well students are achieving
- ensuring that governors seek out parents' opinions about the school
- senior leaders and governors closely monitoring to help make the best use of the school's allocation of pupil premium funding

■ Improve behaviour and safety, by:

- ensuring that all students are clear about how they should behave in class
- ensuring all staff consistently apply the school's systems of rewards and sanctions for students' behaviour
- encouraging students to take more responsibility for their learning and raising their academic expectations
- improving systems of communication, particularly for risk assessment, so that they are always rigorous and there is careful monitoring to ensure students are kept safe at all times.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The school's leaders have not been successful in making the rapid changes necessary to improve the quality of teaching and the behaviour of students in the classroom or in raising students' achievement. Over the past two years, the achievement of students has declined.
- Among senior leaders there is a lack of urgent, dynamic and energetic implementation of the school's strategies and plans. Middle leaders are not always clear about their responsibilities. The school's lack of clear, consistent and rigorously applied policies in all areas has meant that staffing issues have not been addressed effectively and have led to students underachieving. Staff are not clear about expectations for students' behaviour and achievement.
- Too often, teachers and middle leaders provide inaccurate information about students' progress that is then poorly analysed and interpreted by senior leaders. There is confusion over what information is to be gathered and what it means. It is unclear whether the processing of school data is the responsibility of office administrators or educational leaders. This results in leaders and managers not being able to use the information on students' performance to effectively target underachievement. The school is in the process of developing its preferred approach to the assessment of students' progress. However, this is limited by the current unreliability of the school's information.
- Since the school became an academy, leaders have not sought parents' opinions or analysed their concerns in any systematic way. There were only four responses to Parent view, Ofsted's online questionnaire, out of all the parents and carers of boys at the school. The attendance at specific information evenings has improved and the school has a reporting calendar with face to face and written communication. Careers advice is available to students and parents. The general level of parental engagement, however, is very low.
- The curriculum is inadequate. The courses offered by the school do not promote high levels of achievement and good behaviour. They do not adequately prepare students for their future education and employment. Not enough students, particularly the most able, are excited and motivated by their subjects and too many students leave the school without a GCSE pass grade in English, mathematics or both. This seriously delays or limits their future opportunities in education and employment. Students who are starting from a very low level and are on the school's recovery programme have made better and in some cases good progress. At the time of the inspection, the school's website did not include current information about the curriculum that would be of use to new parents and students.
- The school has not had, until the start of the current term, a well-run and fully integrated programme for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This has led to large gaps in students' knowledge and understanding and has restricted their achievement. The legacy of the long-established but predominantly sports oriented programme of activities has allowed students few opportunities to access artistic and cultural options, such as ensemble music. Students do, however, show understanding and tolerance for each other. They respect the wide diversity of faiths and cultures in the school and this helps to prepare them well for this aspect of life in modern Britain. The school provides adequate impartial advice to students regarding future careers.
- The school's system for the appraisal and monitoring of teaching has paid insufficient attention to students' progress and standards. There is now evidence of greater rigour in the performance management of teachers and they no longer automatically progress up the pay scale unless their results merit it.
- The school's use of pupil premium funding has not resulted in narrowing the gap between disadvantaged students and other students. The school has recognised that interventions and strategies used in the last eighteen months have not been successful, and have adopted fresh approaches. These have yet to demonstrate impact on students' achievement.
- The school meets the statutory requirements for checking the suitability of adults to work with students, child protection and safe recruitment. Where outside agencies have been involved in safeguarding issues

they have been satisfied that the school has the appropriate procedures in place. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in the procedures for risk assessment.

- The school has benefited from the support of Lordswood Girls' School, the partner school under the Lordswood Academy Trust. The executive headteacher has shared best practice from the Girls' School and this has resulted in some improvements in the quality of teaching. These improvements are recent and not yet widespread.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The school's governors have not effectively challenged the school's performance in the last eighteen months. Not all governors are familiar enough with information about students' progress and the school's performance compared to others nationally. There is awareness among the governing body of the importance of monitoring how the pupil premium allocation is spent but governors do not have a detailed understanding of its impact. Governors have become more involved in the monitoring of teachers' performance and how that performance relates to their pay. Their effectiveness is undermined by the school's unreliable information system. The governing body meets its statutory requirements in regard to safeguarding. Governors have not successfully engaged with parents or systematically asked for parents' opinions about the school and their children's education since the school became an academy. The school's successful promotion of tolerance and respect towards other faiths and cultures has been supported by the governing body.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Low level disruption in the classroom is persistent and goes beyond being generated by a small minority. It is undermining students' achievement. The prevalence of this disruption is confirmed by teachers' responses in staff questionnaires, students' own comments, school records of incidents and inspectors' observations during the inspection.
- The lack, until the very start of the current term, of a well co-ordinated and purposeful approach to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of students has left too many with a reluctance to learn. Some students do not always have the confidence to speak up in class.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. This is because only recently has the school's monitoring of risk assessments identified activities that placed students at potential risk of harm. General channels of communication and areas of responsibility are still not clear and the collection and recording of information is not well-organised and shows inaccuracies. This compromises students' safety.
- Behaviour around the school has improved as a result of the school employing personnel to monitor the corridors and outdoor spaces. However, students' behaviour is still too dependent on how well it is being 'policed' by staff and too many students fail to show self discipline. Students generally show informed and tolerant attitudes to other cultures, faiths and groups. The school has successfully tackled more extreme behavioural issues and, following a policy of 'zero tolerance', the proportion of permanent and fixed term exclusions has decreased considerably.
- Students say they feel safe in the school and that bullying is rare and incidents are dealt with swiftly by the school. Students know that disrespectful language is unacceptable, although those spoken with said that students sometimes make homophobic comments. Students are aware of the dangers of extremism and show understanding of British values relating to tolerance and the democratic process.
- Although overall attendance has improved and is now broadly average, there remain wide gaps with the attendance of disadvantaged students and students who have special educational needs. Persistent absences have substantially reduced as has the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions. This is following well focused work by the school with the families of these students.

The quality of teaching**is inadequate**

- Inconsistent approaches to behaviour management in class have led to persistent low level disruption of learning for all students. This means too many students underachieve. Valuable learning time is lost because teachers' response to these low level disturbances is too often ineffectual.
- Evidence from books, discussions with students and staff, the school's own monitoring and the low level of student outcomes all confirm that teaching has been inadequate over time. The school's lack of accurate information regarding the progress of students begins in the classroom. Teachers are not fully involved in and do not fully understand the school's systems for tracking students' progress. These systems are insufficiently clear. For too long there has been a lack of clear lines of accountability for teachers and poor management of their performance.
- When some students arrive to learn unprepared, they are not challenged or assisted by teachers. This can lead to a lack of engagement and underachievement. For example, in a mathematics lesson some students without rulers or other equipment attempted unsuccessfully to draw accurate three dimensional diagrams.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. The work set for different groups of students, ranging from the least to the most able, provides insufficient or inappropriate levels of challenge. This leads to many students, including students for whom English is an additional language, making slow progress.
- Support staff continue to concentrate on individuals even when they are working well on their own and do not give enough assistance to others in the class. When support staff are more involved it is too often to deal with behaviour that is distracting students from their learning.
- School leaders acknowledge that a large proportion of staff require one to one coaching in order to affect the necessary changes in their teaching. However, there has been a limited number of highly skilled staff able to give this support. Where expertise has been brought into the school, there is evidence of pockets of effective teaching beginning to emerge.

The achievement of pupils**is inadequate**

- Rates of progress have slowed over the last two years to unacceptably low levels. Students' low attainment in 2013 fell further this year. Students enter the school with attainment which is below the national average and leave the school with attainment that is below or well below the national average.
- For the last two school years the proportion of students at the end of Key Stage 4 making and exceeding the nationally expected rates of progress in English and mathematics were well below those seen in other schools. The progress of some groups of students was particularly low in English and in modern foreign languages, for example, Black Caribbean and Pakistani students, and in mathematics for Black Caribbean students. The school is not doing enough to promote equality of opportunity for these groups. Students for whom English is an additional language make equally low levels of progress as other students.
- The progress of students currently at the school, in both Key Stages 3 and 4, is inadequate. The school's data is not consistently accurate but figures given to inspectors show significant proportions of students making what the school terms as 'negative progress' in English and mathematics. This means that these students have gone backwards in their levels of skill and understanding over the period of a year. Too many students do not have positive attitudes to learning and this limits the progress that they make and the progress of those around them.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students is inadequate. These students represent over half the total number of students in the school. Their achievement has been even lower than the inadequate achievement of other students. In 2013, the difference in attainment in mathematics between disadvantaged students and others in the school was over three-quarters of a grade and was larger still when compared with the national figures. A similar gap of nearly one grade was seen in English. Students

supported by additional funding did not attain as well as others in the school and others nationally. In 2014, in English, the in-school attainment gap remained static and the gap in mathematics widened considerably. Gaps with their peers in expected progress widened considerably in both subjects for these students in 2014.

- Very few of the school's more-able students achieve the top grades at GCSE in English, mathematics or other subjects. More-able students struggle to make the minimum expected progress in English and mathematics and a very small proportion exceed this. This is the direct result of being given work that is not sufficiently challenging throughout the school. The school has not made extensive use of early entry to GCSE examinations.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is slower than might be expected given their starting points. This is because until very recently these students have not always been accurately identified and teachers have not received appropriate guidance in helping them to achieve.
- Students' achievement in science, particularly for students from low starting points, has been consistently better than in English and mathematics. Students' results at GCSE in some subjects have shown improvement in 2014, most notably in art and business studies.
- Students in Year 7 and students selected from other years for the school's literacy and numeracy recovery programme made good progress in the previous school year in catching up with other students.

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	139157
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	451042

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	505
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Brownsword
Headteacher	Jane Gotschel (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	0121 4642837
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