

Finham Park School

Green Lane, Coventry, CV3 6EA

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school provides a caring and stimulating environment where students thrive academically and socially.
- The school is very well led. The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, continue to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching, learning, behaviour and attendance.
- Students make excellent progress and do very well in their GCSE examinations. Standards in English and mathematics are high and continue to rise.
- All groups, including disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make equally rapid progress.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students is very strong. They have a wealth of opportunities to take part in cultural and sporting activities, and many overseas links help foster their understanding of the wider world.
- Teaching is consistently good or outstanding across age groups and subjects.
- Teachers know all about their students' abilities and interests, and provide lessons which engage them and help them make rapid progress. Their marking is typically helpful in raising standards, although not always rigorous in improving literacy skills.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning and conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion around the school.
- The school works very well to keep students safe at all times.
- The sixth form is well led. Improvements to teaching have led to current students making good progress, although some who join from other schools do not settle as quickly as they could and make slower progress as a result.
- Students gain good examination results and the large majority go on to university. The remainder enter training or employment. Sixth formers make a strong contribution to the life of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 50 lessons, 10 of them jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and case studies of individuals, including the frequency and quality of marking and the progress students made.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, three governors, and a range of leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and surveys of parental opinion conducted by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including its self-evaluation and development plan, information on students' current progress, and records relating to monitoring, behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Mallone, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Vivien Corrie-Wing	Additional Inspector
Peter McKenzie	Additional Inspector
Thomas Walton	Additional Inspector
Richard Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Finham Park School is a larger-than-average secondary school with sixth form.
- It converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Finham Park School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Around 60% of students come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is around 40%. This is higher than average. Around 20% of students are of Indian heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is about one eighth, around half the national average.
- A very few sixth form students undertake part of their education at Coundon Court, Tile Hill Wood School and Language College, or Bluecoat Church of England School and Music College.
- About one in seven of the students are disabled or have special educational needs. This is close to the national average.
- The school provides part of the education for a very few of its students at Henley College, City College, Coombe Abbey Country Park, Brakes Training, and Heart of England Training, all situated in Coventry.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and the school provides support to other schools in the local authority and in the wider region.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4. It also meets the interim minimum standards for sixth form students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the marking of literacy is as effective in other subjects as it is in English.
- Provide students who join the sixth form from other schools with a more effective induction package to enable them to make the same progress as other students.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have created a strong culture of learning throughout the school. They constantly review progress on the key areas of teaching, learning and behaviour, and adopt measures to improve any weaknesses they detect. As a result, the overall quality of teaching continues to improve, students get even better examination results, standards of behaviour improve further and the amount of student absence continues to fall.
- Subject leaders carefully track students' progress and make sure that extra help is given to those who need it. As a result, already high standards of attainment continue to rise and the progress of disadvantaged students in particular has accelerated rapidly.
- The school's broad and innovative curriculum caters well for students' individual interests and abilities. In Key Stage 3, the curriculum includes Mandarin, psychology, philosophy and coding. In Key Stage 3 some subjects are taught in original and stimulating ways: for example, inspectors saw a geography lesson being taught in French.
- A very small number of students spend one day a week at a local college or other provider studying towards qualifications in work-related areas such as motor vehicle maintenance and landscaping. Their progress, behaviour and attendance is very carefully monitored by the school.
- Students receive highly effective guidance when choosing their GCSE options in Year 9, in Year 11 and in the sixth form. As a result of the well-tailored advice, it is extremely rare for anyone to leave the school in either Year 11 or the sixth form without going on to further education, employment or training.
- Extra-curricular provision is extensive. Over half the students in Key Stage 3 take part in the 120 courses in sport, art, drama, music and other activities which lead to graduation from The Children's University.
- The pupil premium funding money has been used very effectively. Disadvantaged students make faster progress than others in the school and their standards have risen strongly. Such students' attendance has also increased year on year and is now very similar to that of other students.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Visitors' identities are checked on entry to the school and visiting speakers carefully vetted. This ensures that students are kept safe at school from harmful outside influences.
- The school does exceptional work to offer equal opportunities and prevent discrimination. Disadvantaged students are supported financially to take part in educational visits and with the purchase of school uniform. There is no tolerance of discriminatory language or name-calling, and incidents of this kind are increasingly rare as a result of the school's work on the issue.
- The provision for students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is extensive. Students are explicitly taught about the importance of respect, tolerance and fairness and the democratic values which underpin life in modern Britain. Beyond the discrete personal, social and health education programme and the many opportunities that arise in subject lessons, students' lives are enriched in many ways. International links, for example with a school in China, and visits to local places of worship help foster a sense of respect for all faiths and cultures. Sporting and cultural opportunities are taken up by many. For example, more than 200 students took part in the recent production of *Les Misérables*, as actors and musicians or in back-stage roles.
- The local authority provides useful strategic guidance to the school when required which has helped the school focus on the areas it needs to develop.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is strongly supportive of the school and carries out its duties very effectively. Its structure is aligned to the school's development plan so that governors are linked to the key areas

which are helping the school improve. Governors are knowledgeable about how well students do in examinations, their attendance and behaviour, and about the strengths and areas for development in teaching. They have oversight of the performance management of teachers, including the headteacher, and know that on the rare occasions when staff fail to meet targets they have pay rises withheld. They question leaders closely, especially about financial matters and examination results. They know how the pupil premium money has been spent and the improvements it has brought about in achievement, behaviour and attendance. They are proud of the school and strongly committed to its further improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They have exceptionally good attitudes to learning. Students are punctual to lessons, bring the correct equipment and are ready and eager to learn. They are respectful towards one another, teachers and other adults, and cooperate very readily when working in pairs or small groups.
- Students take great pride in their work, which is well presented and cared for, in their uniform and in the badges and other awards that they receive for good work and effort.
- Beyond lessons, students are equally polite and courteous, for example by holding doors open for one another. Where there are narrow corridors and stairs, students move carefully or wait patiently, passing sensibly through bottlenecks and getting to lessons on time.
- Students take good care of the school environment. The vibrant wall displays of students' work, celebrations of their achievement and materials to support learning are all in very good condition, even in corridors which are very busy at times. Inspectors saw no litter or graffiti around the school.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve. Students who have part of their education in other settings attend regularly and behave very well.
- No student has been permanently excluded for many years and the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen steadily as a result of the work done by the school to improve behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. They and their parents strongly agree that the school keeps them safe.
- Students know about how to keep themselves safe, especially when on social media or using the internet in other ways. They are well aware of risk and know about safe practices, for example when using equipment in scientific experiments.
- Students know about different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and who to go to for help if there is a problem. They say that bullying is rare, but well dealt with if it does occur.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations of students' behaviour and effort. There is no tolerance of bad or inappropriate behaviour. Teachers know their students very well and relationships are strong. This leads to lessons in which students work well and learn quickly.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong. They plan lessons carefully and tailor work to the abilities of specific students or groups of students. As a result, there are high levels of engagement and students make rapid progress across all subjects and year groups.

- Teachers make good use of resources to stimulate students and maintain their engagement. For example in a sixth form media studies lesson, most students worked in small groups and used hand-held computers to help in planning the opening sequence to a film they were making. In another part of the room one student was using the interactive whiteboard to give a presentation to another group of students, who then asked questions about key aspects. All students maintained a sharp focus on their work throughout the lesson, which led to rapid progress.
- Teachers ask questions very skilfully to check and deepen students' understanding. When they find that understanding is incomplete, they adjust the work to ensure that progress does not slow.
- The use of different tasks for different groups of students ensures that all are working at a level that is appropriate to them. If any students fall behind, they are given extra support to help them catch up. When they progress more rapidly, they are given tasks which challenge them further, so that they continue to make rapid progress.
- There is a strong focus on reading in the school. Any students who arrive with reading abilities below expected levels are given very effective support which enables them to catch up quickly. The explicit teaching of literacy in subjects across the curriculum enables students to make more rapid progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is very good. Students make very good progress and achieve very well. Opportunities to apply mathematical skills are built into other subject lessons so that learning in this area is consolidated.
- Teachers set homework which is useful and challenging. They mark work regularly and give students useful guidance about how to improve it. Apart from English teachers, staff do not always pay enough attention to the accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation when marking work.
- The teaching of those who go to colleges or other off-site provision one day a week is good. Students all gain useful qualifications in work-related subjects.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and improving. Teachers have high expectations of students. Some students who arrive from other schools are not used to the exacting standards expected of them in the sixth form and do not always receive the support that they need to settle in and make as much progress as other students.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students join the school with higher than average attainment. They make outstanding progress and do extremely well in their GCSE examinations. In 2014, 67% of students gained five or more grades A* to C including English and mathematics at GCSE. This is well above the national average. The proportions exceeding nationally expected progress in English and mathematics are consistently high.
- Students currently in the school are making even more rapid progress. The school's reliable data show that next year's examination results are likely to be even better. Rates of progress continue to accelerate in both English and mathematics.
- The most able students make rapid progress. They reach very high standards in GCSEs and do particularly well in the humanities subjects of geography, history and religious studies. In 2014 95% of this group gained five or more grades A* to C including English and mathematics at GCSE.
- The school caters very well for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and they make rapid progress.
- In the past, disadvantaged students have not done as well as other students nationally in their GCSE examinations. In 2014, on average they were half a grade behind in English and almost a grade behind in mathematics. Those currently in the school are making much faster progress and the gap is closing rapidly.

- There has also been a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others in the school. Because other students do so well, it is larger than the gap compared to all other students nationally. In the 2014 GCSE examinations, the in-school gap was on average a grade in English and a grade and a quarter in mathematics. Disadvantaged students currently in the school are making much faster progress and for those in Year 11 the gap has almost disappeared.
- Students from ethnic minorities achieve at least as well as other students in their examinations. Those of Indian heritage do particularly well.
- Students are only occasionally entered early for examinations in mathematics. This allows high-achieving students to move on more rapidly and has not adversely affected their performance.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The consortium arrangement enables students in the sixth form to take up subjects which are not offered in the school. The attendance, behaviour and progress of these students are very carefully monitored.
- Student numbers are growing. In particular, there has been an increase in the numbers of disadvantaged students staying on. These students do as well as others in their examinations.
- The sixth form is well led. The quality of teaching is good and improving, and students are doing better in their examinations as a result. Attainment at AS and A level is above average and both are improving year on year. Achievement in work-related subjects is also good and improving. The large majority go on to university.
- Teachers have high expectations of students, who respond by developing mature approaches to independent study. Good marking and feedback support students' learning and ensure that they make good progress.
- Sixth formers conduct themselves impeccably in lessons and around the school and set a good example to younger students. Students make good use of their non-lesson time to study independently.
- The few students who join the sixth form without good GCSE passes in English or mathematics are well supported on programmes which help them gain those qualifications. Those from other schools do not always receive the support they need to become accustomed to the high expectations of teachers in the sixth form, so get off to a slower start.
- Sixth formers play a vital part in school life, helping to mentor a wide range of younger students who are having difficulties either with mathematics or reading, or need support to attend regularly. This work helps develop sixth formers' employability skills, as well as supporting others.
- Sixth formers play a key role in the democratic structure of the school, liaising directly with senior leaders over matters which affect the whole student body. They also take part in the many extra-curricular opportunities offered, which helps broaden their personal development.

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	136963
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	453328

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	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1503
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Burns
Headteacher	Mark Bailie
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	024 7641 8135
Fax number	024 7684 0803
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