

Small Heath School

Muntz Street, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 9RX

Inspection dates

20–21 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Standards have fallen since the last inspection, and the most recent GCSE results showed too little progress for students across many subjects.
- Students' progress in mathematics is weak, and mathematics GCSE results have fallen.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make too little progress, because provision for them is not adequately planned or monitored.
- The capacity of the school to stem its decline is inadequate because leadership is currently dysfunctional. A schism exists between new senior leaders, including the new headteacher, and other leaders and staff.
- The new headteacher has very accurately identified shortcomings in the school's performance, but has not been able to implement improvement actions successfully.
- Staff morale is very low. Staff feel that the new headteacher is critical of their performance but has not provided a clear vision or inspiration for improvement.
- Teachers do not adapt the work they set to suit the varied range of abilities in their classes, so that some finish tasks early and wait, while others struggle to understand.
- Marking varies widely in its regularity and detail. Some books have not been marked for months. Students do not systematically respond to teachers' comments to improve or correct their work. Some work, especially that of boys, is poorly presented.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Progress varies markedly between courses and subjects.
- Across the school and sixth form, the use of information on students' progress to evaluate performance and plan for improvement is weak.
- The governing body has not been effective in identifying and responding to the factors at the heart of the school's decline.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's work to keep students safe remains outstanding.
- Students behave well. They have generally positive attitudes to learning, and are very proud of their school.
- Students develop strong values of mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs, and characteristics.
- The curriculum and the extra-curricular programme are broad and rich, and enhanced by high quality opportunities for work-related learning.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was instigated under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005 with an initial focus on achievement, leadership and management. It was subsequently deemed a Section 5 inspection due to the extent of concerns surrounding achievement, leadership and management and the impact of this on the quality of education.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 31 lessons. Inspectors also made brief visits to other lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were also scrutinised, including form time.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local authority. Informal discussions also took place with staff and students.
- Questionnaire returns from 145 members of staff were analysed.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View questionnaire to provide evidence for the inspection. Evidence from the school's own survey of parents was examined.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, its safeguarding policies, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Ian Hodgkinson, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Capel	Seconded Inspector
Dr Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector
Robert Steed	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

- Small Heath is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with most students of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. Over 90% of students speak English as an additional language.
- There are more boys than girls in every year group; in some years 60% of students are boys.
- At nearly 60%, the proportion of disadvantaged students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for particular groups, which in this school applies to students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the very few looked after by the local authority) is very high compared to the national average.
- Compared with the national average, the proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is high.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.
- The school hosts a specially resourced provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs. This Hearing Impaired Resource Base is shared with Bordesley Green Girls School and managed by the local authority. There are currently two students from each year group in the base.
- The school operates across two sites.
- Year 12 and some Year 13 students were on study leave during the inspection.
- No students are currently educated in alternative provision on other sites.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2014, following the retirement of the school's previous long-serving headteacher. Since the end of the last academic year, three other senior leaders have left the school. A new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have joined the school since September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing effective working relationships between the headteacher and senior and middle leaders
 - ensuring that the headteacher and leaders work with all colleagues in creating a vision for school improvement that is clearly communicated and widely shared across the school
 - strengthening systems for measuring performance which hold staff and leaders clearly and equitably to account for students' progress across the school
 - ensuring a regular supply of high quality information on students' progress which allows leaders and staff in the main school and sixth form to compare the performance of key groups of students with that of other students nationally.
- Improve achievement, particularly in mathematics and for disabled students and those with special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan work which supports the progress of those who find learning difficult, and deepens the knowledge and understanding of those who are more able in each class
 - reviewing the systems for identifying and designating students with special educational needs
 - designing more appropriate packages of support for students with special educational needs and systematically evaluating their impact
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are well trained to provide effective numeracy interventions to those

who find mathematics difficult.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the marking and assessment of students' work is regular, informative, and is used systematically by students to correct or improve their work
 - securing consistently higher standards of presentation of work, especially for boys.
- Strengthen the governance of the school by:
 - establishing a forum or committee for more thorough and regular checks on standards and achievement
 - establishing more direct links between governors and school staff and subject departments to gain first-hand information about the school
 - appointing a governor for special education needs provision, as required by the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

An external review of governance 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 current tensions between the school's new senior leaders, including the headteacher, and longer-established senior and middle leaders, are damaging the school's progress and capacity to improve.
- The headteacher has to date found it difficult to establish her credibility as a leader with a large proportion of the staff. Staff spoke of an excessively managerial style, focused on systems and data, which is at odds with the previous culture of the school, based on building strong professional relationships. They say that the headteacher is not sufficiently visible, including at the start of the school day, to provide an inspiring figure around whom staff can cohere. Although presentations and consultations have been held, many say that they are unclear about the headteacher's vision for the future direction of the school.
- The headteacher has nonetheless correctly evaluated shortcomings in achievement and accurately identified weaknesses in the school's systems of accountability for students' progress. Middle leaders have enjoyed a good deal of autonomy in managing their subjects with some success in the past, but accountability has become loose, leading to wide inconsistencies in practices and outcomes across the school and the sixth form. For example, senior and middle leaders report confusion across the school about the basis for setting progress targets for students, and for making accurate predictions about likely GCSE outcomes. Similarly, responsibility for the monitoring of teaching has rested heavily with middle leaders, leading to inconsistencies in expectations, for example of the quality and regularity of marking.
- There are inconsistencies in the linkage between students' progress, staff performance targets and pay progression. Some staff spoke of inequitable treatment in this regard.
- The headteacher recognises the need to sharpen the school development plan, which was drafted prior to her arrival, to give a greater focus on measurable improvements in the achievement outcomes for all groups of students, and to strengthen the monitoring of teaching.
- The breadth of the curriculum is a strength of the school. It prepares students well for life in modern Britain. The personal, social, health and citizenship strands of the curriculum give students a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and of the law and British political institutions. Students are articulate on subjects of citizenship and how they can make their voices heard, both within the school and wider world. Effective information, advice and guidance about careers and future pathways help a high proportion of students move on to further and higher education or training and employment destinations.
- The school's well-balanced curriculum, including for religious education, ensures that students develop a strong respect and tolerance for others of diverse backgrounds, faiths and beliefs. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form. The school has a clear and effective policy on the promotion of equality, but shortcomings in the use of data to monitor student progress restricts its ability to overcome underachievement of students with special educational needs and to close further the achievement gaps, for example between boys and girls.
- The school has given a high priority to promoting students' literacy, with particular success in encouraging students to read. This well-planned strategy is manifested by purposeful literacy work in tutorials. An emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar is evident in tutorial tasks, but the extent to which teachers reinforce this in their marking varies widely between and within subjects.
- The school accounts clearly for its spending of the pupil premium, which is received for the majority of its students. The money has ensured that students have good access to curricular and extra-curricular activities to overcome disadvantage and keep achievement gaps between disadvantaged and other students relatively narrow. For example, the school's cyber café offers students continuous access to computer facilities, including on Saturdays.

- The new leadership of special educational needs has identified shortcomings in provision, but actions taken to address these have yet to have sufficient effect. In particular, the monitoring of students' progress has been weak and not used effectively to design the appropriate provision for students, or to evaluate the success of support strategies. By contrast, provision for students in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base is well planned and monitored and students in the base make good progress.
- The leadership and management of provision to keep students safe is highly effective. The school has sustained its strengths in this respect since the last inspection. Leaders and managers have ensured that the school fully meets requirements to safeguard the well-being of its students.
- The local authority took swift and thorough action to check on the probity of appointments to the school and its governing body following concerns expressed in the media in June 2014. This confirmed that the school's systems for appointing staff were thorough, robust, and met appropriate standards. The local authority has recognised weaknesses in recent examination results and had planned to strengthen its scrutiny of the school. However, it has been slow to deploy training and support for the leadership of the new headteacher. This is now urgently required.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has not been effective in stemming the decline of students' achievement since the last inspection, or in addressing widespread staff concerns about the school's leadership.
 - The governing body lacks effective direct engagement with the school and its staff. As a result, staff feel that governors do not fully understand the issues facing the school.
 - Governors have been too heavily reliant on school leaders for information on the quality of teaching. They understand the link between teachers' and leaders' performance and pay progression, but have not checked in sufficient detail on the consistency with which this is implemented.
 - The absence of a governor for special educational needs has meant that the governing body has lacked oversight in this important aspect of the school's work.
 - Governors are highly experienced and are aware of overall trends in the performance of the school. However, they do not have a specific committee to explore matters relating to achievement regularly and in depth.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students' positive attitudes to the school and its ethos are reflected in very high levels of attendance and punctuality and very low rates of persistent absence.
- Students are polite, courteous and generally respectful to staff and to visitors. They are proud of their school, and take care of its classrooms, corridors, and large social areas. When required, they move swiftly and sensibly between school sites.
- In most classes, students' keen desire to succeed makes a positive contribution to their learning. Inspectors did see instances of lessons where learning was disrupted by poor behaviour and calling-out, but these are rare and untypical.
- Rates of exclusion have been relatively high, although the incidence of reoffending following exclusion is low, suggesting that the policy does help to modify behaviour in a popular and over-subscribed school which students are keen to attend. Nonetheless, new leaders are reviewing this strategy with a view to seeking alternatives to exclusion. 'The House' is a specialist on-site facility which offers very effective support to students whose welfare and well-being are vulnerable and those whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion. The school works effectively with parents to promote better behaviour, attendance and safety.

- Students, including those in the sixth form, relish the opportunity to take part in the wide range of opportunities designed to develop their leadership, team working and active citizenship skills, such as Outward Bound, Model United Nations, Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Debating Society, as well as working as prefects and mentors to younger students. As a result, students become articulate and well-rounded individuals, well-prepared to play a positive role in society.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students' safety in all its forms is afforded the highest priority in the school, and the school's systems and procedures are exceptionally thorough and robust. Leaders in this area feel that openness, mutual respect and an evident care for the individual creates a culture of safety and safe practices which permeates the whole school.
- Leaders keep alert to potential hazards, and give thorough consideration to the notion that dangers 'could happen here' when shaping their approaches. The safeguarding team meets very regularly, and liaises effectively with external agencies and other teams in the school, such as the inclusion team, to determine appropriate strategies.
- Leaders continually review and update policies and procedures in the light of experience. Thorough staff training, including on the government's 'Prevent' strategies to counter radicalisation, ensures that staff are fully up-to-date with procedures and confident to make referrals to key staff if they have concerns. The additional time given to tutors each week for one-to-one discussions with tutees, called 'Profiling', enables students to raise any concerns they have.
- The strong personal development curriculum enables students to be acutely aware of key matters relating to safety, including e-safety, forced marriage, and threats of extremism and radicalisation. Students have a very good understanding of bullying in all its forms and how to guard against it. They are clear that there is little bullying in the school, and that they know how to report it. Students told inspectors that they feel safe and secure in the school, and that the school takes good care of them.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Key aspects of teaching are too variable in their quality to ensure that students make good progress in all areas.
- In particular, the 'teaching to the middle' in many classes slows the progress for key groups of students. Students who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, too often lack structured resources to help them understand. By contrast, in some classes including in mathematics, students who understand and complete tasks quickly are left doing nothing or resting their heads on tables while others catch up. In such cases, significant opportunities are lost to deepen the understanding of more-able students through more challenging, problem-solving and evaluative work.
- Teaching assistants have not all been adequately trained to provide effective additional support to students in all areas of specific need, for example in catch-up programmes in mathematics.
- The quality and regularity of teachers' marking varies widely within and between subjects. There are excellent examples of students being given clear and helpful feedback on how to improve their work, and systematically making corrections or completing an additional challenge to extend their learning. However, there are also numerous examples of books which have not been marked for many months, in some cases with work which is incomplete or of a poor standard. The presentation of boys' work is generally of a lower standard than that of girls in a number of subjects, and a failure in some cases to set high expectations through marking does not help to close this important gap.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is a key strength in teaching which inspires students' confidence in their teachers and which is consistent across subjects. This is seen where teachers' questioning of the class promotes wide engagement and deeper thinking and helps to stimulate good and informed whole-class or small-group discussions. Teachers encourage students to collaborate positively when working in teams,

and to reflect upon and tolerate other beliefs and viewpoints.

- Teachers often make good use of resources, including through video clips and other information technology, to clarify students' understanding and help bring the subject alive. Inspectors saw a number of examples of teachers' effective modelling of the best approaches students could take to solving problems, approaching examination questions, or making products.
- The contribution made by learning outside the classroom is variable. Students' homework planners suggest that homework is not regularly set in all subjects. However, students are clearly encouraged to use resources, including the library and on-line resources, for research, preparation, and to promote a general interest in reading. Additional subject support is offered beyond the school day to students who are making less progress than they should, especially in Key Stage 4.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students' achievement has declined substantially since the last inspection in May 2013 because significant weaknesses in leadership and management have led to failures to address shortcomings and rapidly put in place improvement actions.
- GCSE results have fallen for two years. While the rate of decline in attainment was in line with a national fall in 2014, students' progress weakened markedly. Students' progress overall and within many subjects was significantly below the national average. There was a wide gap between boys' and girls' progress.
- Students' progress to GCSE has declined particularly sharply over two years in mathematics. In 2014, the proportions making and exceeding expected progress were low in comparison to other schools nationally. Although the school forecasts an upturn in mathematics results this year and provides an intensive Year 11 intervention programme, there remain marked weaknesses in teaching and learning in Year 11 mathematics lessons which restrict the progress students can make.
- While English GCSE results have also fallen from above average to broadly average, students' progress in 2014 was in line with that of students nationally. Students generally did better in English Language than in most other subjects.
- Students' reading, writing and speaking skills have benefited from a whole-school focus on literacy. This has a particularly positive effect in developing English language skills in a school where most students speak English as an additional language. Students' reading development is now tracked and monitored carefully, and books have been bought with a specific appeal to boys in order to address the gender gap in developing reading skills.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding for students who attained less than the nationally expected level in their English and mathematics tests at primary school is spent wholly on supporting students' literacy skills. Given the underachievement evident in mathematics, the absence of a well-resourced programme to support students' progress in mathematics is an important shortcoming.
- Gaps in the attainment between disadvantaged students and others are narrower than such gaps in schools nationally, although the gap for these students is widening in English. In English, disadvantaged students' results were close to the average for all students nationally, but broadly half a grade lower than those of other students in the school. In mathematics they were around a third of a grade lower than students nationally and in the school.
- Higher attaining students made weak progress at GCSE in 2014. They are not consistently challenged to extend their learning in class, or through the expectations set by teachers through marking in books.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs underachieve. This is evident in the school's own tracking data, and sometimes in the classroom where some students flounder because they cannot understand the work. Information on students' progress is not used well enough to ensure that the

support and provision they receive is effective. Students from the Hearing Impaired Resource Base, however, make good progress because their achievement and the quality of provision is carefully monitored.

- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students' achievement in the sixth form has been variable over time although, in contrast with the main school, results at A-level rose in 2014 to broadly match the national average.
- Sixth form leaders were not able to present an analysis of 2014 results in terms of students' progress or value-added, or of the achievement of key groups. This lack of careful analysis of key outcomes to feed into an effective evaluation of the sixth form contributes to some significant variations in students' achievement between subjects. National data for 2014 suggest that while achievement at A-level generally improved so that progress was broadly in line with that expected, at AS-level students made less progress than expected overall and in a number of subjects. Achievement for the few students in vocational courses is broadly in line with that expected. Disadvantaged students in 2013 made better progress than others in academic and vocational subjects.
- Retention and success rates on courses in the sixth form have improved and now compare favourably with the national average. The curriculum offers a breadth of choice within a mainly academic offer, and is being refined further to match students' needs and aspirations.
- While it was not possible to observe sixth form teaching, inspectors were able to hold a discussion with sixth form students, who held very positive views of their provision, including the quality of teaching. They described wide-ranging opportunities for non-qualification activities within school, the local community and businesses which helped prepare them well for the next stage in their education, employment and training. Sixth formers engage well with the rest of the school, and act as positive role models.
- Students are given good advice about pathways into careers and higher education. Students value the support they receive from their teachers and sixth form leaders, and say their individual progress is tracked and supported carefully.
- Success rates for GCSE resit programmes are improving quickly over time in the proportions improving their grades in English and mathematics, but some students still make little or no progress in their resits.

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	103548
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	452282

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	Foundation
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	1325
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jamshed Khan
Headteacher	Shanaz Khan
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2013
Telephone number	0121 4647997
Fax number	0121 4648120
Email address	s.davies@smallheathschool.org.uk

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