

# Furze Platt Senior School

Furze Platt Road, Maidenhead, SL6 7NQ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While school leaders have begun to focus on improving the progress made by some students with special educational needs and those receiving pupil premium funding, the impact of their actions has not resulted in rapid enough improvements.
- The leadership of learning support, aimed at improving the progress of some groups of students, is not always effective.
- School leaders do not ensure that information about students' progress is systematically used. Therefore, teaching over time, for some groups of students, has not been effective and requires improvement.
- As a result, while improvements have been made, some groups of students still do not make progress in line with the good progress made by other students at the school.
- Students' work is marked regularly, but sometimes, students are not given enough opportunities to respond to their teachers' comments and make improvements to their learning.
- The school's actions to keep students safe require improvement. The school is building a new gym on site. While precautions have been taken to make the site safe, school leaders are not always rigorous in ensuring all aspects of the site are secure.
- Although the governing body understands the strengths and areas for development of the school, it has not ensured that school leaders' actions are having an impact on improving the progress of some groups of students, including those with special educational needs and disadvantaged students.

### The school has the following strengths

- Many students make increasingly better progress across a wide range of subjects.
- School leaders and the governing body understand what still needs to be done to improve the school still further.
- The large sixth form is good. It offers a range of courses and fully supports students to achieve their best, both academically and emotionally.
- Behaviour around the school site and in lessons is typically good. Students are proud of their school and are respectful towards each other and the staff that support them.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 39 parts of lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition they made a number of shorter visits to assemblies, small group sessions and extra-curricular groups.
- Eight groups of students from all key stages met with inspectors. Meetings were also held with a range of senior leaders, middle leaders, other staff and with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and the statistical information about the progress and performance of the school. Inspectors scrutinised and examined the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 173 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaires from 71 members of staff were analysed.

## Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sue Cox	Additional Inspector
David Howley	Additional Inspector
David Smith	Additional Inspector
Keith Pailthorpe	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in December 2011. When its predecessor school, Furze Platt Secondary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010, it was judged to be good.
- It is larger than an average secondary school and the majority of students are of White British heritage. There are more boys than girls.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The school has an autistic spectrum disorder resource provision on site, called Shine, catering for 12 students aged between 11 and 19.
- A small number of students attend off-site provision at the following providers: The Haven; The Green Room; Academy 21; Haybrook College; and Rise Alternative Provision.
- The school is part of the Teach Maidenhead initiative.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring that the school site is always safe for students, particularly during the current building programme
  - enabling all leaders to analyse available information on the achievement of different groups of students, particularly disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, and plan work and activities that will improve the progress they make to good levels
  - ensuring that the school's actions to improve the progress made by particular groups of students are monitored closely to ensure they are always fully effective
  - supporting middle leaders to develop their management skills, particularly around whole-school initiatives, such as improving literacy across subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and students' progress, particularly those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium, to good or better levels by:
  - using available information on students' ability to plan lessons and small group work which will ensure students make accelerated progress
  - giving students appropriate time to respond to the marking comments made by teachers, so that they can improve their work.
- 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

### require improvement

- Over time, school leaders have not ensured that their actions have had a significant enough impact on improving the progress made by some groups of students, particularly those with special educational needs and disadvantaged students. As a result, though pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has been spent on improving students' achievement, it is only just beginning to have an impact.
- Available information on students' ability is not always analysed in a way that will help school leaders to plan better ways of improving students' progress. While the progress of some groups is now improving more quickly, it is still not in line with others at the school.
- School leaders are not always vigilant enough to ensure that the school site is safe during the current building programme. They have risk assessments in place, but these are not as robust as they could be.
- Some whole-school initiatives, such as a drive on improving literacy across all subjects, are not always fully effective because some leaders are not confident in their roles. This means that students' progress is not always checked sufficiently closely.
- Some middle leaders are not fully supported to develop their role so that they can apply their management skills, particularly around checking if teaching is improving students' progress.
- The headteacher, governing body and senior leaders understand the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. There is a positive ethos that encourages students' good behaviour. They have begun to address the gaps in progress made between certain groups through the 'Raising Achievement Team' and the greater involvement of middle leaders. Current information suggests that their actions are beginning to have a positive impact on students across all year groups and there is clear evidence that the gaps will be much smaller this year.
- School leaders have high expectations regarding the quality of teaching throughout the school. Weaknesses in teaching are identified early and the school's involvement in the Teach Maidenhead initiative has created an ethos of sharing good ideas across teachers and subjects. This was seen in the higher quality of work starting to be seen within students' books and portfolios. However, the monitoring of teaching in some areas has not been as effective.
- Both the academic curriculum and the extra-curricular opportunities are wide and varied. As a mathematics and computing school, there is a wealth of information and communication technology (ICT) resources available to students and achievement, particularly in mathematics, is strong. Although the school has more boys than girls, school leaders work hard to promote equality and girls were quick to comment on the range of opportunities open to them. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated by school leaders.
- Through the house system and mentoring programme, school leaders ensure that all students are given appropriate advice and guidance as they move on to the next stage in their education and training. This is evident in the growing numbers of disadvantaged students opting to take courses in the sixth form and the good academic progress they make.
- Leadership of the Shine resource provision is good. Links with outside agencies and parents are encouraged. There are effective routines for students to transfer between the resource provision and the main school site. Information on students' progress is regularly shared. As a result, students make good progress.
- A senior leader effectively oversees the behaviour, attendance and progress made by the small number of students attending off-site provision.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire do not have any concerns about the leadership and management of the school and staff believe that there are many opportunities for professional development.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has not routinely and robustly ensured that the school site is consistently a safe place for students.
  - While the governing body understands that some groups of students are not making the same progress as other students at the school, over time, it has not ensured that school leaders' actions are having an appropriate impact.
  - However, the stable governing body does have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. It is supportive of the school's actions to address the gaps in progress. It has ensured the efficient management of the school's finances, met its statutory responsibilities around safeguarding and has effective systems in place to manage the performance of the headteacher. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school, know where there is good teaching and are involved when

teachers are not performing as well as they should. They have received relevant training, including interpreting school-based information, and are fully involved in the building programme and plans to expand the school still further.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## require improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Excellent student and staff relationships encourage a positive learning atmosphere that permeates throughout the school. Students tolerate each other's differences and are courteous, respectful and polite. They work hard in lessons and are keen to support and celebrate each other's achievements. They participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sports, music and drama, and equality of opportunity is actively promoted through the vertical tutoring system.
- Students were keen to talk about their school, feel proud of their achievements and value the support offered to them by teachers and staff. They feel looked after and cared for, and value the extensive range of topics they discuss in class, during registration times, assemblies and in personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions. They are encouraged to reflect on topical issues around life in modern Britain and the wider world. There is a high quality and popular school news magazine, called The Stag, which explores current political, cultural and sporting issues.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very positive. The house points system encourages students to work hard and the highly successful 'Ready to Learn' programme promotes students' ability to be organised and prepared for school.
- Students are smartly dressed, punctual, prepared for lessons and proud of their school community.
- Breaks and lunchtimes are calm; students spending time in specific age-appropriate areas of the extensive school site. Arrangements for students buying food, considering the large numbers, are slick and professionally organised. The site is well maintained and free from litter.
- Students report that bullying is rare and when it occurs, it is dealt with quickly and efficiently. This includes all types of bullying, for instance racist, sexist, homophobic or cyber bullying. When asked to comment on the best thing about the school, one student said, 'there is no racism here'.
- Attendance has been consistently above average over the last three years and this looks set to continue.
- Behaviour in the Shine resource provision is good. Students are encouraged to socialise within the unit and with others at the school.
- The behaviour of students who attend off-site provision is regularly monitored to ensure that the high levels of behaviour expected at school are maintained.
- Of those who responded to Parent View, the majority believe that the school makes sure that students are well behaved and that they deal effectively with bullying.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- The school is currently building a gym on its large and very open site. While the school has taken some steps to ensure students are safe, school leaders and the governing body have not routinely checked whether these measures are effective enough. As a result, some areas require further improvement to ensure that safety routines are consistently good or better.
- Students say that they feel safe. The supportive house system means that all students know who they can talk to should they feel unsafe. Students explained that they knew how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, for instance when using the internet.
- The school meets its statutory obligations regarding systems for safeguarding, including checks on staff and visitors.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their child is safe and well looked after at the school.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not enabled groups of students, particularly those with special educational needs and disadvantaged students, to make the same progress in their work as others at the school, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Some small group work for students with special educational needs is not effective, particularly in

improving their reading skills.

- The majority of teachers' marking is detailed and gives clear advice to students on how they can improve their work. However, students are not given time to reflect and act upon teachers' comments. As a result, some students do not make the good progress they are capable of.
- In those lessons where students make good progress, teachers' excellent subject knowledge and the extensive range of ICT resources available at the school mean that students are actively engaged in their learning. Teachers have high expectations, know their students well and plan around their specific learning needs. They use a variety of questions that deepen students' understanding. They encourage them to work in different ways, to share ideas and support each other. As a result, many students are making better progress, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Teachers are encouraged to work together and to share teaching ideas across subjects. The school effectively supports new teachers.
- Students are encouraged to produce high quality, extended writing, both in school and at home. They take pride in the presentation of their work and know their learning targets.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, some attached to particular subjects, to ensure that in-class support is appropriate and supports students to make progress.
- Teaching in the Shine resource provision supports students well, particularly in their social needs. As a result, these students make good progress.
- School leaders carefully monitor the teaching of students attending off-site provisions, to check that it is having a positive impact on their progress. Generally the support they get meets their learning needs effectively.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their child is well taught at the school and that appropriate homework is set.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- There has been a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and other students over a three-year period. In 2014, in English, the gap between this group and other students at the school was almost two grades, and compared to national averages, was almost a grade and a half. In mathematics, the gap was just over two grades between disadvantaged students and others at the school and over one and a half grades between this group nationally.
- Over three years, progress for disadvantaged students from their starting points has been below average compared to both other students at the school and students nationally. Current students' work and checks on these students' progress show that the gap in progress will be smaller this year.
- Students with special educational needs make better progress than this group nationally. However, there is a big gap between the progress they make and other students at the school. Initiatives to support the development of key skills, such as reading, are currently not as effective as they should be.
- Initiatives to improve literacy across all subjects are not yet effectively led by senior leaders or coordinated by middle leaders. As a result, while there has been a whole-school focus and a policy is in place, these initiatives have not had a direct impact on improving the literacy skills of students with special educational needs and disadvantaged students to good levels. A similar focus on numeracy is in the very early days of development.
- Students enter school with levels of attainment that are above national averages. By the end of Key Stage 4, the number of students achieving five or more A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has been above national averages over the past three years. Checks of students' work and the school's tracking indicate that this will rise slightly this year.
- The proportion of students making three or more levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in both English and mathematics has been above average, particularly in mathematics.
- The progress of the most able students in English is just above the national average and in mathematics it is above. Attainment at the highest grades is much higher than the national average in a number of subject areas, including English, mathematics and the sciences.
- Over time, students with special educational needs in the Shine resource provision make good progress compared to other students with special educational needs attending the main school. Students attend lessons in both the mainstream school and the unit and their progress is tracked regularly to ensure their learning needs are being addressed.
- The majority of students were entered for GCSE mathematics during the winter of Year 11. A smaller number were entered at the end of Year 11. Early entry did not have a negative effect. The proportion of

students attaining the highest grades, including the most able, is above the national average.

- There is a large and well-stocked library, which is regularly used by students to aid and develop their enjoyment of reading.
- Of those who responded to Parent View, the majority believe that their child makes good progress at the school.

### **The sixth form provision**

**is good**

- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students arrive at the sixth form with attainment that is in line with national averages. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress and achieve well in their courses.
- The majority of students achieve places at their chosen universities, following extensive mentoring, advice and guidance from the very supportive sixth form leadership team.
- It is a large and vibrant community, where students behave well and feel safe in a supportive learning environment. Excellent facilities and high staff expectations ensure that students are encouraged to work and play hard in 'a family' atmosphere.
- Students are highly motivated, ambitious and supportive of each other and younger students at the school. They are smartly dressed, very proud of their school and its achievements and say that they feel safe. They show the utmost respect for each other and the staff that support them and attend regularly.
- The mainly academic curriculum offers a wide selection of courses and there is an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities, including: sports, drama, visiting speakers, the highly professional Stag news magazine and the school radio. Many students opt to undertake the Extended Project, which encourages students to independently research an area of interest.
- The sixth form leadership team is well led. Students are encouraged to be actively involved through key leadership positions that they formally apply for. These come with a range of responsibilities and duties, which the students enthusiastically engage in.
- The school is committed to encouraging students who receive extra funding in the main school to attend the sixth form and the number is gradually growing. The current progress of these students is very good.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137740
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	449689

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Le Page
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tanya White
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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