

The Wordsley School Business and Enterprise and Music College

Brierley Hill Road, Wordsley, Stourbridge, DY8 5SP

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The good leadership of the headteacher has led to continued improvements in the school since the previous inspection.
- Checks on teaching are rigorous and these have improved its quality, so that students' progress has accelerated.
- Senior and subject leaders lead their areas of responsibility well and this is helping to improve students' achievement.
- Governors are challenging school leaders effectively and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how well students are learning.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations for students' academic and social achievements.
- In business and music, good teaching is leading to students' accelerated progress in these subjects this year. Enterprise skills are developed well.
- Relationships between adults and students are extremely positive. Students have good attitudes to learning and they behave well.
- Staff work effectively to care for the students and ensure they are safe in and out of school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Students are tolerant and respectful of the beliefs and values of others.
- Students' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. It is good. They make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including science, art and modern foreign languages.
- Almost all parents who stated a view believe their children to be safe and happy in the school and would recommend it to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers routinely use information about their students' prior achievement to plan activities that are appropriately challenging. This sometimes limits students' progress.
- Work in class is not always getting the best out of disadvantaged students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons, of which 10 were seen jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Inspectors visited a number of assemblies and tutorial sessions. The inspection team also made short visits to lessons during a number of walks through the school to look at students’ attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with five groups of students and talked informally to students during breaks and at lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school’s evaluation of its own performance, plans for improvement, policies and records of students’ behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also scrutinised safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors considered 42 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and took into account the results of a school survey of over 300 completed questionnaires. Inspectors noted the 76 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Thomas Walton	Additional Inspector
Paul Farr	Additional Inspector
Mary Arnold	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, and has a specialist status in business, enterprise and music.
- Almost all pupils at the school are from White British or other White backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend alternative provision off-site at a range of providers including Dudley College and Halesowen College.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- The governing body was reconstituted in March 2015. A new Chair of the Governing Body and several new governors were appointed.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teachers routinely make use of information on students' prior achievement, particularly in the case of disadvantaged students, to design classroom activities that are suited to students' needs and provide them with appropriate levels of challenge in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by the governing body, provides successful leadership for the school. His clarity of purpose and vision have ensured the school has moved forward. The areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. This has led to sustained improvement in teaching and students' achievement and a climate where students behave well and are keen to learn.
- Leaders, including middle leaders who lead departments, are effective. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to improve as a result of their thorough and meticulous checking on teaching and its impact on learning.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively and leaders set demanding targets for teachers to meet. Targets are appropriately linked to teachers' professional development and to their students' progress. Staff are given clear guidance so they are able to enhance their skills. The positive impact of staff development has led to good teaching and improved students' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Staff foster good relationships with students and each other. Leaders ensure that all students have the same opportunities to succeed, and discrimination of any kind is wholly discouraged. Leaders have been successful in promoting regular attendance. Consequently, this has remained above average for a number of years.
- Leaders make good use of tracking information in meetings with staff to discuss students' progress and identify those at risk of falling behind. Most students, particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are making good progress as a result of the planned interventions that result from these meetings.
- The range of subjects taught meets statutory requirements. The number of options available to the most-able students have been increased recently so that they may enjoy greater breadth to their studies. The number of courses offered to those in most need of support have been reduced to enable them to benefit from more support and make better progress in English and mathematics.
- The school prepares students well for life in modern Britain. The values of tolerance and mutual respect are promoted effectively. Students are very polite, courteous and take much pride in maintaining the positive ethos that is so evident throughout the school. Work in history, business and enterprise enable students to understand the British rule of law and democracy.
- The school is good at promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Consequently, students have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They demonstrate mature attitudes and execute their duties effectively with pride, whether as house captains, sports captains or school council representatives. Students' cultural development is enhanced by the strong promotion of, and achievement in, music and art.
- The school ensures students attending off-site provision attend regularly and receive the support they need to succeed. The school monitors their welfare or behaviour carefully to ensure these students make good progress.
- Students benefit from good information and advice about careers and educational programmes they can follow. As a result, they say they feel able to make good, informed choices about their futures. Good use of links with businesses are used to raise aspirations and help students when making career choices.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet requirements. Members of staff are fully trained in child safety and are checked for their suitability for working in school.

- The local authority provides an appropriate and effective level of support for this good school. The school has an excellent partnership with parents. Parents' responses to Parent View were nearly all positive. The vast majority believe their child to be happy, safe and well looked after at the school and would recommend the school to others. The school website provides good opportunities for parents to access the extensive range of information available to them.
- The school is using the pupil premium funding effectively to provide new reading programmes and specific interventions that are helping students to make up lost ground in English and mathematics. The school is aware that, in class, whilst most teachers use the tracking systems to identify the individual needs of students and help them catch up, this practice is inconsistent. A few teachers do not use the information thoroughly enough to plan and adapt lessons. Where this happens, students' progress slows.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. The new Chair of the Governing Body provides good leadership. Several governors are recent appointments. They have brought a variety of skills that have enhanced the expertise of the existing team of governors.
 - Following an external review, governors have improved their skills and effectiveness considerably. A rigorously planned schedule ensures that all governors have received training so that they fully understand their roles and are effective in executing their duties. Governors make good use of data about their students' performance and know how it compares with other schools. They know about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and achievement. They are supportive and increasingly ask probing questions about the school.
 - Governors have worked with the headteacher to ensure that suitable systems are in place for managing the performance of staff. They have a clear understanding of the importance on maintaining a close link between teachers' performance and salary progression and tackle underperformance robustly.
 - Governors actively review the impact of teaching on students' progress and link this with the school's development plans. They monitor the school's finances carefully. Governors oversee the use of the pupil premium carefully and check the impact of the school's use of this funding on the achievement of eligible students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Relationships between adults and students are positive. Students have good attitudes to learning in all year groups. They behave well in lessons, are polite and are always prepared to help each other.
- Students take pride in wearing their uniform, including the badges noting their accomplishments, that they wear on their school blazers. They take pride, too, in the presentation of their work and in the school's environment. The walls of corridors display photographs of past and present students who have made a positive contribution to the school and achieved success. There is no graffiti and students are active in keeping the site clear of litter.
- The wide variety of learning opportunities and experiences provided by the school make a positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Students are proud of the contributions they make to the life of the school. For example, they readily undertake roles as school councillors, as representatives of the school in a team or in a musical or dramatic production.
- Attendance is consistently above average, reflecting the students' enjoyment of school. The behaviour and attendance of students attending courses at other venues are good.
- Occasionally, a small number of students have difficulty in concentrating on their learning, but the number of exclusions has consistently been very low over time. The school's records and the views of almost all parents and staff confirm that students' behaviour is typically good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students are confident that the school cares for them and keeps them safe.
- Students have a good understanding of the risks they may encounter, such as those on the internet. They understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Students have a good understanding of bullying and of the different forms that it can take. They express confidence that members of staff will listen and that they deal quickly with the few incidents that arise. Students say that bullying is extremely uncommon. School records confirm this.
- Safeguarding arrangements are implemented fully. All staff and students are aware of what to do in case of concern. Staff training is kept fully up to date in this regard.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They plan work carefully and use questions effectively to check students' knowledge and understanding and to deepen their thinking.
- Teachers develop positive relationships with students so that students are motivated to work hard and do well. This creates a positive atmosphere in all classrooms and promotes mutual respect.
- Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and provide good support to disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This is helping these students to make consistently good progress.
- Teachers provide good support for students' literacy and their skills are well developed. Writing is a strength of the school. Teachers set high expectations and students take a pride in the context, presentation and structure of their work. Extra help in literacy is available for students who fall behind and the school provides short programmes and one-to-one support so that these students quickly catch up.
- Mathematics teaching is good throughout the school and in some subjects, such as science and technology, the development of numeracy is also strong. This is enabling students to make good progress.
- The marking of students' work is effective and follows the school policy consistently. Consequently, students receive clear guidance consistently on how to improve their work and what they need to learn next. Students regularly respond to teachers' comments and suggestions for their next steps. The good use of self-assessment helps students to reflect on what they have learned, identify their errors and determine their next steps for improvement to reach the next level.
- Teachers usually provide a variety of work to match the capabilities of different groups of students. Occasionally, they do not make full use of the assessment information available to them to support students effectively in class. This limits students' progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most students are making faster progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. In 2014, the proportion of Year 11 students who made expected and more than expected progress in English and mathematics was close to the national average. Current data show that progress is accelerating throughout the school. Students are making good progress in a wide range of subjects and, particularly, in the subjects such as music, for which the school has specialist status, as well as in modern foreign languages, art and science. This confirms that students' achievement is good.

- Students attending off-site provision make good progress in their studies in relation to their starting points.
- Good use of Year 7 catch up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below expected standards in English and mathematics) has enabled students to improve their literacy and mathematical skills. The programme to raise literacy levels, by providing additional support for students and making literacy an explicit focus of all subjects, has been particularly successful. Records show that more students are reading more books, more often.
- Throughout the school, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. They have made rapid progress over the past year because they receive effective support from well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. The needs of these students are fully met. This is a mark of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The most-able students make levels of progress that are in line with similar students, nationally. School data indicates a marked improvement in the proportion of students making better than expected progress in English and mathematics. As a result, the proportion of students securing the highest grades is rising.
- Since the previous inspection, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and other students in English and mathematics has narrowed. In 2014, in English, disadvantaged students were about three quarters of a grade behind others in the school and others, nationally. In mathematics, students were almost one full grade behind their classmates and other students, nationally. Disadvantaged students' progress has accelerated this year due to effective use of the pupil premium funding, so that the gap in performance is narrowing.

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	103858
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	462576

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	744
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Betteridge
Headteacher	Michael Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2013
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