

Perry Beeches III the Free School

Bath Row, Ladywood, Birmingham, B15 2EF

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement at Key Stage 3 is inadequate because too many students are underachieving, including the most-able.
- Students' attainment is low across Key Stage 3 in art, drama, design technology and French. Students are therefore not well enough prepared to start GCSE courses in these subjects in Year 9.
- Too few students make the progress they should in mathematics, science and many other subjects, with only a small number of students who make good progress across all of their subjects.
- Teaching is inadequate. Too much is dull and fails to engage students who become bored and start to fidget because they do not have enough to do or work that makes them think harder.
- The most-able students make slow progress in English and mathematics. They are not given work which recognises what they can already do and appropriately challenges them.
- Too many students cannot read well enough to make sure they are able to understand written work and instructions in lessons.
- School leaders do not know how well disadvantaged students achieve compared with others in the school. School leaders do not use information well so do not know if the pupil premium funding is making any difference to these students.
- Inaccurate and inflated teacher assessments give an overly positive view of the achievements of students, suggesting a better picture of the impact of teaching on learning than is really the case.
- Senior leaders have an unrealistic and inaccurate view of the school. Weaknesses are not identified quickly enough so actions taken to improve the school are too slow.
- Targets set for teachers, to help them to improve their practice, are not challenging enough. Targets are not used well enough by leaders to reward the best teachers and to provide support for those who need it the most.
- Governors are not given the information they need to help them hold school leaders to account. They therefore believe the school is better than it is.
- Behaviour and safety requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are very proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school which is seen in their good attendance.
- The small number of students who have recently started in the sixth form benefit from work experience, enrichment activities and opportunities to take on leadership roles with younger students.
- Students and families are very well cared for through links with health and social care agencies.
- Students are provided with a wide range of social, moral, spiritual and cultural activities which contribute to their good development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 18 lessons including four that were observed jointly with senior leaders. Short visits were also carried out to lifelong learning lessons and a paired reading group. An inspector also observed an assembly.
- Two Year 8 students showed an inspector around the school. Inspectors met formally with two groups of students and also spoke with students during social times, at break and lunchtimes, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair of the local Governing Body and two other governors. Inspectors also met with the chief executive officer and the executive headteacher of Perry Beeches The Academy Trust.
- The inspection team considered the views of 41 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and an email written by a parent to the school during the inspection. The views of 47 staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire were analysed together with an email written to Ofsted by a member of staff.
- Inspectors analysed a variety of information about students' progress, their attendance and behaviour and other aspects of their personal development. The inspection team also examined records related to keeping students safe, the school's self-evaluation documentation and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Denah Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bernice Astling

Additional Inspector

Terence Payne

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

- Perry Beeches III opened as a free school in September 2013. The school forms part of the Perry Beeches multi-academy trust of schools.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school and currently has students in Years 7 and 8. There is a very small sixth form for students who started in the school in September 2014. In time the school will grow to accommodate the full secondary age range.
- The school counts Years 7 and 8 as Key Stage 3. Students will be starting their GCSE courses in Year 9.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is much higher than seen nationally, with almost two-thirds of students known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding, which provides additional government funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than the national figure. A similarly high proportion of students have a first language which is not English. Students come from a wide range of different heritages; about a fifth of students are Black Caribbean and a slightly smaller proportion are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is much higher than seen nationally at about two fifths of students.
- Perry Beeches III has a headteacher who reports to the governing body. The executive headteachers work across all the schools in the Trust. Twenty three teachers are employed to work in the school, about half of whom are inexperienced or recently qualified. Two are unqualified teachers.
- External support to improve teaching and leadership is currently provided through the other schools in the Trust.
- The school occupies a six-storey building which was originally built as offices but was never used for this purpose. Outside space for use in social time or for games and sports in physical education (PE), is very restricted. Students walk to a nearby sports facility for some of their PE lessons, accompanied by teachers. There are plans to develop nearby land to provide an outside area for PE. Plans to develop the building further to provide access via two existing fire escapes will reduce over-crowding on the one staircase.
- The school shares a sixth form with Perry Beeches II, another free school in the Trust. In 2013–14, a small number of students from Perry Beeches II were taught some of their lessons in information technology (IT), business studies and health and social care at Perry Beeches III. This arrangement has continued this year and has been extended to include English literature, geography mathematics and biology.
- There are no students who access alternative, or off-site, provision apart from sixth form provision and PE.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate students' underachievement and ensure their good progress in all subjects by making sure that all teachers know how, and take action, to:
 - assess students' work accurately and use this information well to identify where there are gaps in learning
 - plan work which addresses weaknesses and builds on earlier learning, avoids too much repetition and is at the right level of difficulty for students
 - give clear instructions to students and check their understanding before they start work
 - tell other adults who are supporting the lesson what they should do and which students they should work with to make sure that all groups of students, but particularly the disadvantaged and disabled students and those with special educational needs, quickly catch up with their peers.

- Take prompt and decisive action to improve students' reading skills by:
 - repeating checks on reading ages for all students to identify those who need more intensive support when they start in the school and those whose reading skills may slow as they move through the school
 - introducing a programme which teaches the weakest students to read and ensures they read books that are at the right level for their stage in reading
 - training sixth form students and other adults in the use of phonic strategies (the sounds letters represent) so that they know how to help students in paired reading sessions.

- Implement a whole school approach to numeracy so that students are given every opportunity to apply and to improve their skills across other subjects.

- Improve leadership by introducing more accurate checks so that leaders at all levels, including governors, have an accurate view of the school and the areas that need to improve by:
 - using teacher assessment information in the separate subjects of English and mathematics more strategically, so that leaders know how much progress is being made from individual starting points by groups of students and how this compares with others in the school and nationally
 - using teacher assessments and information on the progress being made by students to inform judgements being made on the quality of teaching
 - checking students' written work is set at the right level of difficulty
 - checking the quality of teachers' marking in students' books.

- Improve the way in which targets are set for all teachers and, when successfully achieved, are used to reward the best teachers and leaders by:
 - using the Teachers' Standards and career expectations to make sure targets set are sufficiently challenging
 - using information on the progress being made by students in teachers' classes, in subject areas, in year groups or whole school, as appropriate to the teacher's role in the school.

External reviews of governance, and of the school's use of the pupil premium and catch up funding should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- School leaders at all levels, including governors, have an unrealistic and inaccurate view of the school's performance. Weaknesses are not identified quickly enough and, as a result, actions taken to improve the school are slow.
- Judgements made by senior leaders on the quality of teaching are inflated. Leaders do not scrutinise students' achievements well enough to identify where there may be weaknesses in teaching. Checks on the quality of teaching do not give sufficient attention to the progress being made by students, based upon their ability when they started in the school.
- Senior leaders do not manage teachers' performance well enough. Targets set for teachers to help them to improve their practice do not relate directly to the Teachers' Standards and are not sufficiently challenging. All teachers were deemed to have met their targets which were set for 2013–14, although progress made by students in some subjects was inadequate.
- School leaders do not know enough about which groups of students are at risk of underachievement because the analysis of assessment information is ineffective. As a result, some groups of students such as the most able are underachieving in English and mathematics and not enough is done to identify the reasons for their slow progress.
- Assessment information provided by some teachers is inaccurate, but particularly so in mathematics and history. Teachers are therefore unable to use this information to identify gaps in learning or to see if their actions to improve progress are making any difference.
- Checks on students' work in books carried out by senior and subject leaders do not identify where students are being given work which is too easy or repetitive for them.
- Disadvantaged students appear to attain as well as other students in the school and to make similar progress to others. However, school leaders routinely use an overall average of progress made by all students in English, mathematics and science which masks particular weaknesses in individual subjects. Senior leaders are therefore unable to hold subject leaders to account, or to take action to provide further support for disadvantaged students where it is needed. Information on progress made by disadvantaged students in each subject separately was provided during the inspection but could not be compared to the performance of other students, as similar information for other students was not available.
- School leaders are not sufficiently committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination as they do not know if the pupil premium funding is making any difference to improving progress in English and mathematics for disadvantaged students.
- Improving the reading and literacy skills of the weakest readers is not tackled urgently enough through a programme that teaches them to read. Far too many students in Year 7 have a reading age which is well below their actual age. No information was provided for students in Year 8.
- Students are not well enough prepared to start GCSE courses in Year 9, particularly in art, drama, design technology (DT) and French where students' attainment is low and many students, including the most able, have not made enough progress over the school's compressed two-year Key Stage 3. Students in Year 8 have chosen option subjects for GCSE courses to start in September 2015, but were not allowed to choose both history and geography which some students told inspectors they wanted to do.
- Professional development opportunities are available to improve teaching and develop leadership skills. Teachers are encouraged to start masters-level qualifications and leaders have opportunities to take part in 'Future Leaders' programmes.
- The school's work to engage with parents is highly effective. The school's employed social worker helps parents to make the necessary links with health and social care agencies. Parents are given the

opportunity to develop their own employability skills through working with their children in the family learning programme. Although only small numbers currently attend, it is hoped that this number will grow in future. Parents have very positive views about the school.

- Opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are seen everywhere around the school. Positive messages that reinforce one of the 'PB values' of respect are displayed prominently and students told inspectors that British values mirror the PB values. Students enjoy the themed weeks and 'dropdown days' where they have opportunity to find out more about particular issues such as 'Black History', lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues and careers information.
- Year 8 students told inspectors they receive useful advice and careers guidance which helped them to make informed choices about their GCSE courses for Year 9.
- The small number of students who have recently started in the sixth form are well provided for with work experience, enrichment activities and opportunities to take on leadership roles with younger students. The Trust has a positive impact on the sixth form by increasing the variety of subjects available through the shared sixth form arrangement.
- School leaders have not yet planned for the introduction of new approaches to assessment without using National Curriculum levels.
- Many teachers are in the very early stages of their careers and students do not have the opportunity to be taught by more experienced teachers who demonstrate consistently good practice. Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an unrealistic view of the school and do not have the necessary skills to challenge school leaders about the information being presented to them.
 - Governors do not know enough about the difference being made by pupil premium funding to the progress of disadvantaged students.
 - Progression on the teachers' pay scale is not being used well enough to reward only the best teachers and leaders.
 - Governors were not aware of the latest guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (March 2015), nor if there were any changes to their statutory responsibility that need action.
 - Detailed information on pastoral care, guidance and support is provided for governors who have a good knowledge of the wide range of strategies used by the school to support the most vulnerable students.
 - All governors have completed safer recruitment training and they make sure there is at least one governor on every interview panel for new staff.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meets statutory requirements and are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Low level disruption occurs in lessons where teaching is dull and fails to engage students throughout the lesson, and when teachers' instructions are not clear enough leading to students being confused about what to do.
- Bullying occasionally occurs and the schools' records of incidents of poor behaviour show there is some use of racist language. This is more prevalent in Year 7 than in Year 8, and particularly towards the start of the year when students join the school and are unfamiliar with the expectations for consistently good behaviour. Students told inspectors they are confident that bullying stops when they report it to an adult.
- Exclusions have increased this year, compared with that seen in 2013–14, as the number of students in

the school has grown. Four students have been permanently excluded since the school opened; three of these were excluded this year.

- Students demonstrate pride in their work; they are keen to earn merits in lessons for their good effort and willingly answer questions in class. However, inspectors did see some graffiti in books which is not always stopped by teachers.
- Students work well together in class and are used to sharing their ideas with others and helping partners with their work if needed. Students confidently spoke in assembly about their views on equality, one of the 'PB values' that students enthusiastically uphold.
- Inspectors observed exemplary behaviour by students as they walked from school to the Perry Beeches newly acquired City Centre Sports Arena, a local sports facility for their PE lessons. Students are proud of their school, see themselves as ambassadors and explained that they want to maintain the good reputation held by the school in the local community.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- Inspectors shared their concerns about the unsupervised use of the lift by students to gain access to all floors. School leaders took immediate action in response, and this practice has now stopped.
- Overcrowding on the stairs and the corridor where students queue for lunch results in a small number of students 'pushing in' rather than waiting for their turn. Plans are in place to reduce overcrowding in the new academic year by providing access to all floors through an additional staircase.
- Good attendance, which is well above that seen nationally, shows students enjoy coming to school. School leaders use a range of strategies to improve attendance but these are less effective with some groups of students such as where there are child protection concerns in the family home.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe and have covered a wide range of themes through personal, social and health education including e-safety, knife crime, extremism and radicalisation.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Inadequate teaching has resulted in too many groups of students failing to make the progress they should across a range of subjects; in particular, the most-able students in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is sometimes dull and fails to engage all students throughout lessons. When this happens, students become bored and start to fidget while others chat to friends.
- Additional adults supporting lessons is common practice. In many lessons observed during the inspection, there were typically two or three adults in class including teaching assistants and/or senior leaders. This expensive resource failed to make any difference where teachers did not tell the other adults what to do, or direct them to work with certain students. Often, the supporting adults wandered around the room targeting students when they became restless and tried to keep them on task for longer. In some cases, the support adults were a distraction and interrupted the natural flow of the lesson.
- School leaders ask teachers to identify three different objectives for each lesson, linked to old national curriculum levels. Sometimes, the level stated bears no resemblance to the level of difficulty of the work and students are misled into thinking they are doing work at a higher level.
- Teachers do not always plan work that is challenging enough to make all students think more deeply about the subject. Where teachers plan work for different groups of students in a class, teachers fail to acknowledge what many students can already do.

- Students' work seen in mathematics books is sometimes too repetitive and time has been wasted asking students to repeat work they have done earlier in the year. Students do not have the opportunity to produce longer pieces of writing to apply and develop their skills. In other subjects, this is done well and Year 8 students wrote essays on creationism in religious education (RE) and globalisation in geography.
- Teachers' assessments are inaccurate in a range of subjects, but most noticeably in mathematics. Although books are marked regularly and students are given advice on what to do to improve their work, the level assigned to the work, by teachers, is often inflated.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement at Key Stage 3 is inadequate because too many students are underachieving, including the most able.
- Too few students in Years 7 and 8 make the progress they should in mathematics and science, with only a small number of students who make good progress across all of their subjects.
- The school expects about 90% of current Year 8 students to reach the standards expected for their age in English, and a similar proportion in mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 3. Attainment is much lower in art, drama, Design Technology (DT) and French where only two thirds of students are 'on track' to reach level 5.
- Disadvantaged students and students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are underachieving compared with all students in the school. Although the progress of Black Caribbean students is similar to that of all students in Year 7, in Year 8 the progress of this group has slowed and they too are underachieving.
- The school's own data indicate that almost three quarters of Year 7 students are making expected progress in English, but that almost half are not making the progress they should in mathematics and in science. Progress in other subjects is very slow, with far fewer students making expected progress in art, drama, music, DT, geography, history, RE and PE.
- Students are making better progress in some subjects in Year 8. Almost two thirds of students are making expected progress in mathematics and science, which is in line with that seen nationally. Progress remains unacceptably slow in other subjects.
- The proportions of students making better than expected progress in each year group are very low across many subjects with only small numbers of students indicated to be making good progress in performing arts and practical subjects.
- Year 7 catch up funding is mainly used to support literacy development and leaders acknowledge they have not done enough to promote good numeracy development.
- Weak readers are not being taught how to read well enough and they are therefore not improving their reading at a fast enough rate. Sixth form students listening to students read do not know how to help students to improve their reading. Although most of the weakest readers in Year 7 have improved their reading age over the nine months they received support, there are still 17 students in Year 7 with a reading age below 9 years 6 months. No information was provided for students in Year 8.
- Pakistani students and students who speak English as an additional language make much better progress than all students in the school in Year 7 and 8.
- The school reports that Year 12 students are all 'on track' to pass their examinations at the end of Year 12. No information was provided on the starting points for these students so it was not possible to identify the progress made by individual students. An average progress value provided for subjects indicates that students overall are making broadly expected progress.

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	139797
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	450235

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Richardson
Headteacher	Darren Foreman
Date of previous school inspection	Not inspected
Telephone number	0121 6472760
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	enquiries@perrybeechesIII.co.uk

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