

Perryfields High School Specialist Maths and Computing College

Oldacre Road, Oldbury B68 0RG

Inspection dates	10–11 December 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders have been overgenerous in their evaluation of the school, and not acted promptly to address priorities for improvement. As a result, although the school is improving, some areas of weakness identified at the last inspection persist.
- Leaders' use of information is inconsistent. Some data are overlooked, and some judgements are based on inaccurate figures.
- In 2015 at GCSE level, the most-able pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done. The proportion of pupils gaining A or A* grades was low.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to extend and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' progress in some subjects, including history, music and some aspects of design technology, is weak.
- The quality of teaching is variable. The work does not always provide a good level of challenge, especially for the more-able pupils in the class. During lessons, teachers sometimes do not identify the progress made by different groups, so that they can adapt the learning accordingly.
- The sixth form requires improvement because achievement, although improving, remains low. Activities additional to academic lessons are not planned carefully enough to develop learners' knowledge and skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders identify promptly those pupils who require additional support, and help teachers to plan their work. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress.
- The school provides well for pupils who present challenging behaviour. Exclusions are therefore comparatively rare.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the school, and are providing increasingly effective challenge to senior leaders.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. They behave well in lessons and during social times. They enjoy school, and attendance is high.
- The school promotes strong spiritual, moral and social values, including respect for people from different cultural backgrounds. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work for all pupils, especially the most able, which consistently provides a high level of challenge
 - provide pupils with sufficient planned opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - identify more effectively the extent of pupils' progress in lessons, so that teachers are able to address misconceptions or set additional work.

- Raise standards of achievement by:
 - making sure that pupils' progress in all subjects is at least in line with that of pupils nationally.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all information used for checking and evaluating pupils' progress, including that resulting from regular assessments, is reliable
 - plans for improvement are based on a frank and even-handed evaluation of the school's progress
 - all leaders are held to account for the impact of their actions within an agreed deadline.

- Improve the quality of provision in the sixth form to accelerate learners' progress and raise standards by:
 - identifying more precisely those strategies which have the greatest impact on learning at advanced level, so that they can be used consistently to drive up standards
 - providing 16–19 study programmes which combine more effectively learners' academic study with other activities which develop their skills and attitudes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of pupils' progress has been too generous. Some data used to judge the effectiveness of the school's work have been inaccurate. In the overall evaluation of the school presented to inspectors, weaknesses had been overlooked or marginalised.
- Leaders have not pursued actions to improve the school with sufficient urgency, and as a result, some weaknesses present at the last inspection, such as low achievement in the sixth form and low standards in history, persist. Leaders have not yet ensured that progress in all subjects is consistently good.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching for disadvantaged pupils, including a summer school, and to fund mentor support. However, the school's evaluation does not explain why expenditure has only had a limited impact on closing the gap in disadvantaged pupils' achievement. Planning for this group lacks precision and urgency.
- Leaders have designed a new system of assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels which is based throughout the school on pupils' progress towards their target grades at GCSE. Leaders have ensured that pupils and their parents have a good understanding of the new arrangements. However, the school acknowledges that leaders are in the early stage of ensuring that judgements teachers make on pupils' progress are reliable.
- Current GCSE target grades for individual pupils in many subjects are too low to challenge pupils to achieve their full potential. However, as part of the new assessment procedures, leaders are encouraging departments to raise these targets. Subject leaders are ambitious for their departments, and enthusiastic to improve the quality of teaching.
- The school's curriculum is broad, and pupils appreciate the opportunity to choose from a wide range of subjects at Key Stage 4. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly, both through the regular curriculum, through assemblies and tutor time, and through days on which the normal timetable is set aside and outside agencies visit the school. As a result, pupils understand British values and cultural diversity well. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, and most pupils take part at least sometimes.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school's procedures for managing and improving the behaviour of those with particular needs are strong.
- Pupils receive thorough guidance from Year 7 onwards about the next steps in their education or careers. This is intensified in Year 11 to include a careers fair and an impartial introduction to different pathways. As a result, every pupil leaving the main school in 2015 found an appropriate placement in further education or training.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding now meet statutory requirements. Staff keep careful pupil records, and are effective in securing the involvement of parents and other agencies to help those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. They check regularly on the attendance and well-being of pupils in alternative provision. Nevertheless, some documents were not up-to-date when the inspection began, and although they were amended by the end of the inspection it remained evident that the administration of safeguarding requires improvement.
- Senior leaders' evaluations of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching observed accorded with those of inspectors. School records indicate that the quality of teaching is improving, and staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that training is proving helpful. Targets are set for teachers that depend on pupils' progress, and the results are used to make decisions about pay rises and promotion.
- The local authority has not held the school to account with sufficient rigour, and so it has not contributed effectively to moving the school forward. The school has not found it easy to use information supplied by the local authority's human resources department to maintain its own records.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governors provide effective oversight of the school. They have ensured that they themselves are properly trained, and well informed about the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and how it compares with achievement in other schools nationally. They are ambitious for the school and its pupils, and are anxious to see weaknesses in provision tackled and standards rising. Meeting records show that they are beginning to ask challenging questions of senior leaders, for example about the new assessment procedures.

- Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. They check that the school meets all its responsibilities through the rigorous scrutiny of staff during the appointment process, and the school's compliance with safeguarding requirements, although they did not identify errors in the school's documents. They check the arrangements for school trips and monitor the safety of the site, for example upgrading the provision of first aid cover during the school day.
- Governors make sure that the school stays within its budget, and have recently introduced solar panels to reduce energy expenditure. They manage the pay and performance of the headteacher and other staff effectively, making sure that pay increases are awarded on the basis of teachers' performance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, while improving, remains too variable to support good achievement. Teaching has not ensured that pupils, especially the most able, make consistently good progress across a range of subjects. Sometimes the strengths seen in the best teaching are present to only a limited extent. Some teaching in design technology, history, music and science remains weak.
- Weaker teaching is characterised by work that does not provide a challenge for some or all of the pupils in the class. Most commonly, this applies to the more-able pupils in any particular group. Sometimes these pupils have to complete too much routine work before meeting a task that stretches them.
- Pupils are rarely challenged to think more deeply or to develop their understanding as fully as they might do. Teachers only occasionally challenge pupils to extend their ideas orally, or to give them the opportunity to develop an argument fully in writing.
- Teachers sometimes use questioning or mini-whiteboards to check on pupils' understanding, but in other lessons, all the questions are answered by a few enthusiastic pupils. This hampers the teacher's ability to know how well different groups of pupils are learning, and so to reshape or extend the tasks in response. One pupil told the inspector that sometimes if she was stuck, 'the teacher might just carry on'.
- The school's marking policy is applied by each department to reflect their pattern of learning. Teachers generally provide clear feedback to pupils on how to improve, and leaders intend the strong practice in English to be adopted throughout the school. 'Fix-it time' allows pupils to reflect on their work and learn from their mistakes, and the opportunity to do this is usually provided.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are evidently strong, and promote learning. In the minority of lessons where the work does not entirely engage their interest, they nevertheless remain polite and compliant. Teachers apply behaviour management strategies consistently, so that pupils know what to expect.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is generally very good, and they insist on the correct use of subject-specific terms. In Key Stage 4 and at A level, teachers explain clearly how pupils can meet the examination criteria for a particular grade. Homework is set regularly, and pupils explain that it makes a useful contribution to their learning.
- Teachers generally promote literacy well, especially in English, drama and art, but more opportunity to use writing to deepen and extend pupils' understanding would strengthen the development of writing skills. In mathematics, pupils learn at a good pace, but little explicit attention is given to deepening the understanding of mathematical ideas.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well. Leaders identify those strategies that help a particular pupil to learn, and class teachers pay good attention to the advice, making sure that the tasks set are suited to their needs. The school provides a wide range of additional support, including small group teaching and closely tailored provision for those with particular medical or behavioural needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel very safe in school, and the parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire agree. The pupils that spoke with the inspectors reported that staff supervision of the large site is effective.

They say that bullying is very rare, and cannot recall any racist incident. All pupils know who to turn to for support, and staff deal with any incidents effectively when they arise. Pupils are able to explain the virtue of tolerance, and its importance for the school community.

- The school teaches pupils how to be safe in many respects, including about online safety, the danger of substance abuse and the importance of sexual health. There are effective procedures for the recruitment of staff and on the supervision of visitors to the school. Pupils on alternative provision behave well and say that they feel safe because they understand that the arrangements support their learning and personal development.
- Pupils are generally assured and confident learners, especially at Key Stage 4. They understand how their attitudes to learning contribute to their academic success, and appreciate knowing their targets and how to achieve them. They appreciate how the mixed-aged tutor groups allow them to benefit from the maturity of older pupils and to act as role models for younger ones.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive, approaching their work with commitment and enthusiasm. They bring the right equipment to lessons and take a pride in their appearance, and usually present their books tidily. Pupils are particularly astute and constructive at marking a partner's work, and they collaborate effectively when working in pairs.
- Pupils are typically polite, and their conduct at social times is orderly and responsible. They respect the school's facilities, and inspectors saw only a few pieces of litter.
- Leaders give careful consideration to pupils whose conduct gives rise to concern, and decide which form of provision will be most successful in addressing their behaviour. Inspectors found that pupils in the behaviour recovery room, the inclusion centre and the Oaktree Centre understood what they had done wrong, and appreciated the school's efforts to help them to improve. This skilful management of challenging behaviour has led to a rate of fixed-term exclusion which is below the national average and continuing to fall. One pupil was excluded permanently last academic year.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and attendance overall was above average last academic year. It has risen further this term and is now high. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has also risen, and is in line with that of all pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils that are persistently absent is low.
- Pupils told inspectors that lessons are disrupted only on very rare occasions. Inspection evidence indicated that when the learning does not engage pupils' interest, some become passive and uninterested, and a few talk quietly across the teacher until they are asked to be quiet.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The pupils who left the main school in 2015 started with attainment that was average, and left with attainment that was average overall. However, attainment on several courses, including history, music, Spanish and some aspects of technology, was below the national average. Achievement in the sixth form was also below average.
- In 2015, the overall proportions of pupils who made expected progress in English and in mathematics were slightly above the national average, and the proportions that exceeded expected progress were in line with the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils left Year 11 in 2015 on average three quarters of a grade behind other pupils in English, and one and a third grades behind in mathematics. Compared with pupils nationally, the gaps were very similar. Information supplied by the school indicates that disadvantaged pupils are now starting to make stronger progress.
- In the last two years, the progress of the most-able pupils has fallen, and in 2015 at GCSE level it was below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A* and A grades in most subjects was low. In contrast to the overall picture, proportions of most-able pupils who exceeded expected progress in English and in mathematics were below average. During the inspection, most-able pupils made good progress when work was sufficiently challenging, but their progress was restricted when work was too easy or repetitive.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. At Key Stage 3, they benefit from Year 7 catch-up funding which is used to promote the reading of fiction, and to provide more intensive literacy support for those who need it. As a result, pupils make significant gains in their reading ages which improve their ability to learn in all subject areas.

- Key Stage 3 pupils' enthusiasm for a commercial reading programme encourages a love of fiction, and develops their reading skills. The learning resource centre is well used. Older pupils understand the skills required for research and revision.
- During the inspection, inspectors often saw pupils making good progress in lessons. This was most commonly true in English, geography, physical education and modern foreign languages, where standards are rising.
- Those pupils on alternative provision at the Oaktree Centre at other institutions make at least expected progress given their starting points, and in some cases, their medical needs.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The sixth form draws almost all its learners from the main school. Numbers in classes are often small, but the 16–19 roll is rising slowly. Almost all learners follow a two-year academic pathway, with a view to gaining a place in higher education.
- The 16–19 study programmes require improvement. This is because achievement, although improving, remains low, and measures to raise outcomes and improve the quality of provision are too recent to have had the impact intended. Advanced level results on academic courses in 2014 and unvalidated results for 2015 indicate that learners' attainment and progress were both below the national average, and that progress on some courses was low. Outcomes for the smaller number of learners on vocational courses were more mixed. A high proportion of the few learners who join the sixth form without a grade C or better in English or mathematics succeed in attaining one.
- Leaders are ambitious for the future of the sixth form, but they have not used accurate data to evaluate learners' progress. This has hampered the identification of the core reasons for underachievement, and action taken to address weaknesses has lacked precision. Leaders have used too many different strategies rather than focus on those particular developments which will lead to a substantial and sustained rise in 16–19 learning outcomes.
- The 16–19 study programmes for individual learners include all the wider aspects of learning, but some elements, such as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme and appropriate work experience, are not effectively combined with learners' academic study. As a result, for example, learners pointed out to inspectors that they had received very little guidance recently on safety and well-being.
- The school's records indicate that the quality of teaching on 16–19 study programmes is improving, and inspection evidence supports this. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and explain carefully how learners can meet examination criteria. They provide learners, including the most-able, with a good level of challenge. Teachers generally provide detailed written feedback so that learners know well how to improve their work.
- Learners' attitudes to their study are very positive. They have high aspirations and a good understanding of how their courses will enable them to fulfil their ambitions. In lessons, they concentrate hard, collaborate effectively and discuss ideas with enthusiasm. Attendance in the sixth form is high.
- In discussion with inspectors, learners spoke warmly of the support they receive from staff, both academic and for any social or emotional difficulties they might experience. They feel entirely safe in school. The relationships between teachers and learners are conspicuously strong.
- 16–19 careers advice is strong. The school makes good use of its links with local universities, and learners told inspectors that they felt very well supported in choosing their future destinations. Records show that over recent years, almost all learners have progressed to their preferred destination, usually in higher education.

School details

Unique reference number	104012
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10002504

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,270
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Gallant
Headteacher	Mr Dai Meredith
Telephone number	0121 421 7979
Website	www.perryfieldshigh.sandwell.sch.uk
Email address	carol.price@perrys.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school is an above average-sized secondary school with a small sixth form.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remaining pupils are mainly from Indian, Black Caribbean or Pakistani backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is average.
- The school runs an off-site behaviour unit, the Oaktree Centre, in conjunction with Bristnall Hall Academy. Currently, three pupils attend this unit full-time.
- At Key Stage 4, a very small number of pupils currently receive full-time education in alternative provision provided by the local authority for those with medical needs, and a very small number receive full-time education at the James Brindley School. At Key Stage 3, a very small number of pupils have taken up placements at the Ruskin House campus of Sandwell Community School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 39 lessons. Eleven lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited an assembly and tutor time, and observed pupils' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes. One inspector visited the Oaktree Centre to check on pupils' progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with four groups of pupils, including some chosen at random, and spoke with many more informally.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons. They scrutinised a number of exercise books in more depth. They also looked at information on pupils' targets and current levels of achievement.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and their evaluations; curriculum plans; records showing how leaders check on teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; information provided for parents; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 52 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, the 50 responses to the pupil questionnaire and records of pupils' views gathered by the local authority. Inspectors also considered the 75 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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