

# Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham B30 3QA

**Inspection dates** 27–28 January 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, leaders, staff and governors have worked exceptionally hard and effectively to transform this school. It is now a calm, positive community where the daily focus is on learning and success.
- Expectations of pupils are high and they respond well. One pupil summed up the rules simply as 'no messing around allowed'.
- Pupils' behaviour is usually respectful and sensible. Staff are very skilled in supporting pupils to manage their behaviour.
- Attendance has risen hugely over the last two years. Many pupils attend consistently well. Others improve their attendance significantly from very low starting points. The school pursues non-attendance vigorously and effectively.
- The school places great importance on keeping pupils safe and teaching them how to keep themselves safe. The staff's knowledge of safeguarding is very good.
- The school works highly effectively with other agencies to meet pupils' complex needs.
- Pupils join Lindsworth having had gaps in their education and often some negative experiences of school. The school quickly establishes what their needs are and how best to help them.
- Once pupils are settled, their progress in lessons accelerates rapidly and most start to do really well in English, mathematics and their other subjects. Pupils work hard and show pride in their work.
- Teachers pay careful attention to pupils' individual needs. They plan in detail to ensure that learning is truly personalised. Where pupils need extra help with key aspects such as reading, they receive a tailored programme that helps them to improve their skills.
- The governing body is well led, skilled and dedicated. Governors' work has been influential in improving the school.
- Leaders are very clear about how they plan to maintain these high standards and about the areas of the school that need to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Gaps in staffing in mathematics last year led to some pupils falling behind. These pupils still have considerable gaps in their skills and knowledge.
- Some of the really good aspects of teaching are still new and not yet consistent.
- The accuracy of assessment is not moderated enough with other schools.
- Past pupils have not been sufficiently prepared for GCSE examinations, which has led to some gaining lower marks than they were capable of.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Ensure that mathematics teaching is consistently good or better and focuses closely on analysing and putting right the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Ensure that all the effective teaching strategies that are now present in the majority of lessons, and which are having a good impact on the outcomes for pupils, become fully established and consistently used throughout the school.
- Further improve GCSE and other examination outcomes, and ensure assessment in all year groups is accurate, by:
  - establishing links for teachers with other mainstream counterparts to moderate work and to share good practice
  - ensuring that pupils are sufficiently prepared for examinations.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders have taken consistently effective action to improve the school, to very good effect. They have been highly focused, dynamic and tenacious. On this journey they have been very well led by the headteacher, who has set a clear direction for change and taken some difficult decisions in order to allow the school to become more effective. When asked by inspectors to reflect on the changes that have taken place, typical comments from staff included: 'Things have changed so much here'; 'Pupils are settled, calm and more engaged with lessons. Everyone knows what's expected now – proper order.'
- Previously, much of the staff's effort went into managing difficult behaviours. Now, the culture is one of good learning coupled with strong pastoral care. Staff provide skilled support for pupils to enable them to manage and improve their own behaviour. They also provide good role models for pupils in the way they dress, talk and conduct themselves.
- The creation of the pastoral leadership team and the pastoral and learning support staff role, known as PALS, is a very successful development. Support staff have become a pivotal part of the success of Lindsworth. They understand how to support pupils, both in the classroom and with their social, emotional and learning needs, and they do this very well.
- In the recent past, turbulent staffing has had an adverse effect on pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics but also in a number of other areas at times. Senior leaders have been very effective in appointing suitable new staff to teaching and leadership roles. This has greatly improved the stability and quality of staffing.
- The analysis of information about behaviour and attendance is exemplary. It gives leaders an excellent knowledge and understanding of where and why problems occur, and which pupils are doing well or need support. It enables leaders to support staff effectively where they need more help with managing particular groups or individuals.
- Safeguarding is uppermost in the thinking of staff at all levels. The staff's calm behaviour and their good relationships with pupils really help the pupils to feel safe. As one pupil commented: 'When there is an incident, it is dealt with immediately. People are well looked after.' Staff are highly aware of the complex circumstances of their pupils. They are alert for any concerns on a day-to-day basis, know how to seek help, and make referrals for child protection issues promptly and appropriately. The wide range of training they have received has had a good impact.
- Leaders carefully select the alternative provision they use to ensure that it is safe and suitable. Checks are rigorous and the quality of teaching and learning at the providers is carefully monitored.
- The residential provision makes an excellent contribution to the progress and welfare of pupils who use it. It has a clear impact on pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic progress.
- The curriculum is developing well. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy and, for Key Stage 4 pupils, on gaining qualifications. The options system in Years 10 and 11 allows pupils to study different subjects each year and gain qualifications quickly, which they find motivating. There is a growing emphasis on personal and social development, including sex and relationships education, which the school plans to expand further. There is limited opportunity for pupils to experience a modern foreign language, an aspect which the school is aware it needs to address.
- Getting some pupils to attend well is a continual challenge for the school. Systems to deal with non-attendance are very good, and the constant contact from school is effective with many families. The multi-agency group is wide ranging and is crucial in helping the school to support pupils who do not attend well enough because of highly complex family circumstances.
- The positive relationship that has developed between the school and the local authority has helped to ensure that the school has received suitable support.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The Interim Executive Board (IEB) that was in place for most of the last two years was highly effective in supporting the school to improve. Members spent a great deal of time in the school, looking at key aspects in need of improvement. Careful attention was paid to improving safeguarding, attendance and teaching and learning. Governors' scrutiny and challenge was valuable and effective.
  - A smooth transition has been made to a federated governing body. The Chair of the IEB has become Chair of Governors. Governors from the federated school are interested in and committed to Lindsworth as well as to their original school.

- Financial management is now secure and there are suitable plans in place, in conjunction with the local authority, to deal with the historical deficit. Governors have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium funding is spent and how effective this has been, particularly in providing the good level of pastoral support to improve behaviour and attendance.
- Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and are suitably involved in determining whether pay rises should be given to staff.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Over the last year, the quality of teaching has improved enormously. There were already strengths but these are now widespread. Pupils' responses to learning reflect the improvements in teaching. Teachers have high expectations and they focus on learning, not behaviour. Staff expect pupils to apply themselves and to concentrate for extended periods of time and most do. One pupil expressed the view that 'lessons are fun; they're more practical now' and others agreed.
- A key strength of teaching is the way in which planning takes careful account of the needs of each individual within the small classes. This is something that leaders rightly insist on. Teachers think carefully about how each lesson builds up pupils' skills and leads to the next stage in their learning.
- Most teachers adapt the style of their teaching to the needs and dynamics of different classes well, using group work where appropriate or individual work where this is more suitable. The majority of lessons are suitably challenging.
- The school pays careful attention to developing pupils' literacy skills in different subjects. Some good examples of this were seen during the inspection. For example, in a food technology lesson, the key words for the lesson were used throughout, and pupils did a quick spelling and vocabulary test before making their Cornish pasties. The teacher approached the test in a low-key way, which meant pupils were relaxed yet still took it seriously. In an English lesson, the teacher used phonics strategies well to help older pupils sound out the words they wanted to spell. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher used fun lateral-thinking puzzles to get pupils to work out key vocabulary. Such strategies are not yet used consistently, but their use is growing week by week.
- The support staff, PALS, have become skilled at supporting learning and are almost always deployed well by teachers.
- The school's predictions for pupils' GCSE outcomes in 2015 were over-favourable. The school thinks that, although pupils had been prepared for the content of the examinations, they were put off by unfamiliar examination conditions. They have now started to give pupils experience of examination conditions on a termly basis from Year 7 onwards.
- Although the school moderates its assessments of pupils' work within school, it does little of this with other schools in order to check the accuracy of its assessment. Teachers do not have enough opportunity to work with colleagues outside Lindsworth, particularly from mainstream schools, in order to hone their practice.
- Sometimes the teaching in mathematics does not take enough account of the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils discussing their concerns rather than just reacting. Staff are skilled at finding out what is wrong and helping pupils to resolve issues so they can carry on learning. One pupil who had been at the school for a while reflected on the impact of this strategy, saying: 'It's much calmer. The staff are good.' Others agreed, with one adding: 'We have to talk about things now.'
- Pupils like the way the school is divided into teaching bases for different age groups. This helps them to feel safe and settled while still allowing them to socialise with those in other years when they want to.
- Leaders are developing ways for pupils to take responsibility and have a sense of pride. Pupils in each year group have run coffee mornings or afternoons for their families. These have been well attended, and

pupils have enjoyed showing off their work and their school. Recently pupils ran a fundraising event for Macmillan Nurses, which again they did with care and pride.

- Many pupils can confidently talk about British values and the way in which these link to Lindsworth values. This work is ongoing, with a 'value of the month' displayed around the school and talked about frequently.
- The school council is well established. It meets at least once a fortnight, supported by PALS and a teacher. Pupils have time to reflect on school life academically and pastorally. Recently, they have been looking at aspects of equality and diversity, for example being involved in discussing the need for Halal food to be on the school menu. 'Concern boxes' are provided around the school for other pupils to express their concerns.
- Work to prevent bullying is strong and constant. This work also extends into pertinent themes, such as knife crime and gangs. The school frequently engages outside agencies to support them with such work.
- Pupils are taught thoroughly about internet safety.
- Pupils have recently seen a play in school called *Tapestry*, dealing with themes of radicalisation and extremism. This was popular with pupils because, they say, they 'got it'. As a result of this and their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, their understanding of these important issues is developing well.
- The school is highly aware of the need to teach pupils about sex and relationships, and how to behave safely in this regard. Good work takes place in PSHE lessons and this is soon to be extended to include outside agencies.
- The recent participation in Black History Month taught pupils a great deal and also helped the school to celebrate its own ethnically diverse community.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils arrive promptly to lessons with minimal need for chivvying as they move around the school site. The vast majority concentrate well for the whole lesson, making good efforts to complete the work they are given. During the inspection, a walk around the school shortly before breaktime found that all pupils were in their lessons and were working hard. Staff and pupils say that this is now typical.
- Lunchtimes are calm and pleasant. There is a relaxed atmosphere, to which pupils respond well. Staff and pupils eat together. Lunchtime staff noted that pupils' manners are 'much improved'. Many pupils like to play football after they have eaten, which they do in a competitive but sporting way. Others choose quieter games and activities. After lunch, they move swiftly to lessons with no fuss.
- Pupils respond very well to the reward system. They like the school's constant positive communication with their parents and carers; PALS frequently telephone home to tell parents when their children have achieved particularly well or improved an aspect of their behaviour and attendance. Where pupils do not try hard enough or they disrupt learning, they have to make up the time, but the number of pupils being sanctioned in this way is small and falling month by month.
- The nature of the pupils' difficulties means that occasionally the behaviour of an individual can be volatile. Staff are skilled in defusing incidents. Physical intervention is sometimes used to keep pupils safe, but is infrequent. The use of exclusion to manage behaviour is minimal. Good relationships between the school and the local police have really helped some pupils to modify some serious issues with their behaviour.
- The majority of pupils improve their attendance quickly once they start at Lindsworth. Many younger pupils in particular attend well. There is a small but significant number of pupils, however, who attend very little and another group whose attendance is too sporadic.

### Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils whose attendance rate at Lindsworth is reasonably good are making good progress from their starting points overall. Where pupils' attendance is very low this inevitably has an adverse effect on what they achieve.
- Because classes are small and staffing levels are high, pupils receive a great deal of individual attention. This helps them to complete a good amount of work during each session, which has a positive impact on the pace at which they learn. During the inspection, pupils were consistently observed working hard and progressing well throughout each lesson, and the work in their books indicated that this is now the norm for the majority.

- A number of pupils arrive at the school with very low literacy levels. Reading programmes for individuals are having a good impact on improving pupils' confidence and skills. Younger pupils in particular make good progress with their reading, including those with very low starting points. All pupils have a lesson called 'drop everything and read' once a week, which is helping to develop more enthusiasm about reading. More pupils are prepared to read aloud in different lessons. The school rightly identifies the need for this intense focus on reading to continue.
- The majority of younger pupils are making good progress across most of their subjects. This is helped by their good attendance. Some are still not progressing as they should be in mathematics. There are gaps in their learning in mathematics which have not been systematically tackled and this is holding them back.
- GCSE and equivalent outcomes in 2015, although lower than predicted, were the best that the school has achieved. More pupils than ever were entered for examinations. The majority of pupils in Year 11 achieved at least one qualification. A third of pupils attained three or more GCSE passes and a small number of the most-able pupils attained five. Over a third gained a GCSE in English and mathematics. More pupils were successful in English than in mathematics and science. For the majority of pupils, these outcomes show the good progress they had made over the previous year.
- Almost all the current Year 11 pupils who took a GCSE in physical education or religious education at the end of Year 10 passed. The school's assessment information indicates that examination outcomes this summer should show another improvement.
- The majority of pupils who attend alternative provision for all or part of the week make steady and sometimes good progress with their courses.
- Most pupils in last year's Year 11 went on to suitable education or training, taking courses that built on those they had studied at school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103632
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10004121

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	89
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Collins
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 693 5363
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lindsworth.co.uk">www.lindsworth.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:reception@lindsworth.bham.sch.uk">reception@lindsworth.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19–20 March 2014

## Information about this school

- Lindsworth caters for secondary-aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Their difficulties often result in challenging behaviours. Some pupils have additional needs such as autism, communication difficulties and learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- There were no girls on roll at the time of the inspection.
- All the pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Around a third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- Around a tenth of pupils at any one time are in the care of the local authority.
- Pupils frequently join the school during the school year; many join after Year 7, sometimes as late as Year 11.
- The school uses off-site alternative provision for 30 of its pupils, of whom four attend their off-site provision full time. The providers used are: Blue Whale, Envirohort, Bournville College, Nova Training, Southside Learning and Righttrax.
- The school has part-time residential provision for a small number of pupils. There are 12 full-time equivalent places in the residence. Pupils can stay for one night a week only, or for more.
- Lindsworth is federated with Springfield House School and shares a governing body and a headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- When Lindsworth was inspected in March 2014, it was judged to require special measures. Since then it has received five monitoring inspections from Her Majesty's Inspectors to evaluate its progress.
- During this inspection, inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons. They walked around the school during lesson times to see how settled pupils were in their classes. They talked to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. Inspectors observed break and lunchtime and the activities taking place at these times. Three members of the school council showed an inspector around the school and talked about their experience of school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; senior and middle leaders; staff; the Chair, vice-chair and four members of the governing body; and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents about achievement, behaviour, safeguarding, curriculum and leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

## Inspection team

Sue Morris-King, lead inspector

Susan Hickerton

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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