

# Isambard Community School

The Learning Campus, Redhouse Way, Swindon, Wiltshire SN25 2ND

## Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not resulting in pupils making good progress and achieving well. Assessment information is not accurate and teaching does not meet pupils' needs.
- Outcomes have been too low over many years and show little sign of improvement. Pupils are not well prepared for their future.
- Leaders' views of the school's strengths and weaknesses are too generous. Evaluations do not accurately identify what is working and the changes needed. Information is not used to tackle weaknesses quickly enough.
- Governors' work has not focused enough on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not follow up the concerns they identify with the urgency and rigour needed. This is hindering the school's improvement.
- Teachers do not plan learning which sufficiently challenges pupils. The most able pupils are not set work which enables them to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well or make the progress needed in order to achieve as well as other pupils nationally. The difference between their achievement and that of other pupils is too large and shows no signs of diminishing.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not adequately take into account the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they receive the support they need to make good progress.
- Leaders and governors do not have a good understanding of the impact of the use of the additional funding.
- Leaders do not consider sufficiently the risks that young people face when they are engaged in activities that are not on the school site.
- There are too many racist incidents. Leaders have not taken the robust action needed to tackle this.
- Work to ensure that staff and pupils are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism has been too slow. As a result, many teachers are not sufficiently trained to recognise indicators of risk or prepare pupils to stay safe.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite and courteous to adults.
- Teachers plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils' emotional and spiritual development.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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.

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - improving the accuracy of leaders' evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses and using the information to plan appropriate improvements
  - carrying out thorough risk assessments for all activities when pupils are off-site during the school day and use the findings to adequately protect pupils
  - ensuring governors focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the progress pupils make, holding leaders rigorously to account
  - evaluating the impact that additional funding has on raising the outcomes of pupils for whom it is intended
  - training all staff to recognise the risks and indicators of radicalisation and extremism
  - taking action to eradicate racist incidents.
- Urgently take action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
  - use the information they keep on pupils' achievement to plan work which builds on what pupils already know, can do and understand
  - have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - challenge the most able pupils to think more deeply about their learning
  - accurately assess pupils' learning and address any misconceptions quickly
  - provide opportunities for pupils to understand the risks in society, particularly around radicalisation and extremism.
- Accelerate the progress made by all pupils, especially the boys and disadvantaged pupils, so they achieve as well as other pupils nationally from their starting points.
- Ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils:
  - improve their attendance
  - improve their behaviour so that the number of exclusions falls further
  - have their academic needs met through teachers' planning so that their progress accelerates rapidly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and managers, including governors, are failing to bring about the changes needed to raise pupils' achievement. Where actions have been taken, they have been too slow. Leaders do not use their understanding of what has worked well to bring about improvements in other areas of the school's work.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is over generous. They do not assess strengths and weaknesses accurately. For example, in 2016, leaders' forecast for pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 was significantly higher than the results pupils actually achieved.
- Improvements have been too slow. The approach taken by leaders results in staff being unclear about leaders' expectations or how changes to policies and practice can bring improvement about effectively. Some staff comment that when new policies are introduced, they do not understand what is trying to be achieved. Proposed changes do not address the areas that need most urgent attention. In Ofsted's online survey, staff noted that changes are not always fully thought through by leaders; inspectors agree with this.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching over time are not rigorous enough. Information from monitoring activities is not used to provide teachers with support to improve their practice quickly enough. The progress pupils make over time is not given sufficient emphasis when making judgements about the quality of teaching. Therefore leaders' evaluations are too generous.
- Teaching assistants are not always well briefed on the needs of the pupils they are supporting. As a result, they do not know how best to support pupils in their learning and pupils do not make the rapid progress needed to catch up.
- Leaders and governors do not know the impact the use of the pupil premium funding is having to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The impact of the funding for the most able disadvantaged pupils is not monitored. Leaders' plans for the use of pupil premium funding in the current academic year do not meet the requirements set out by the Department for Education.
- Leaders and governors do not know if the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is making a difference to pupils' achievement and progress.
- Senior and middle leaders do not use information about pupils' progress and behaviour sufficiently to identify priorities for improvement. Consequently, teachers do not receive information to help them to plan effective learning. As a result, pupils do not build on what they already know and understand.
- Improvements to the school's leadership have been too slow. Leaders often respond to individual situations, such as safeguarding, but do not go on to identify any trends or patterns that might raise wider concerns. In turn, they do not make decisions which effectively tackle the root cause. Where changes are effected they have been too slowly implemented and are not adequately monitored.
- Staff training has not kept pace with many of the changes to education over recent years. Therefore, staff are not adequately prepared to ensure pupils are well taught

and know how to keep themselves safe. Many staff have not been trained in the government's 'Prevent' duty and no staff have had training on being able to identify pupils at risk of female genital mutilation. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to consider the risks associated with radicalisation, extremism and other risks they may face.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced in the main. A review of the courses pupils can study at key stage 4 led to significant changes to ensure that pupils can achieve better grades and are better prepared for the next stage in their education. For example, leaders have changed the entry policy for GCSE examinations so that pupils no longer routinely sit exams when they are in Year 9 or Year 10, which has limited their progress in the past.
- Pupils are provided with a range of experiences to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, they have participated in a project to understand the Holocaust and recently took part in the European Day of Languages. Pupils also engage enthusiastically in projects for charities, such as supporting the local food bank.
- Pupils are able to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities; however, relatively few participate. Leaders are unclear about why this is and their analysis is limited.
- The local authority has provided a lot of support to the school; however, it has not had the impact needed to rapidly raise pupils' progress. In some cases, the support has not been well matched to the school's needs. In May 2016, the local authority carried out a teaching and learning review which highlighted many of the school's shortcomings, but leaders' actions to address these have been too slow.
- A very small number of pupils spend part of their week in alternative provision. The school receives timely information about their attendance and requests information at key points through the year to monitor their progress and behaviour.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have failed to hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or pupils' outcomes.
- Too often governors have not questioned and challenged the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or pupils' progress in their meetings so they are unaware how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally.
- When governors ask challenging questions of school leaders, there is no evidence to show that these are followed up to ensure that any subsequent actions taken secure the improvements needed.
- The recently appointed chair of the governing body has a much better understanding of the school's performance and what needs to be done to make the rapid improvements needed.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders and managers do not take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that

pupils will be safe during the school day when they are not on the school site, for example when they undertake work experience.

- Leaders do not proactively consider the safety of the most vulnerable pupils when arrangements with outside agencies break down. Relationships with other agencies, such as social services, are in place but leaders and managers do not hold other agencies robustly to account.
- The governors' audit of safeguarding arrangements, carried out in 2015, was not rigorous enough and so some shortcomings were not identified.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- Teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils already know and can do. This means that activities planned do not sufficiently challenge pupils, which limits the progress they make.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not receive the tailored support that is needed to help them make good progress from their starting points. While these pupils are identified by teachers, there is insufficient evidence to show how the teaching they receive is ensuring they make accelerated progress.
- The most able pupils are not routinely challenged in their work or provided with opportunities to deepen their understanding. Consequently, too few achieve the highest grades.
- The quality of feedback pupils receive from teachers is too variable within subjects and across departments. Too often, it does not help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve and it is not received in the timely manner as set out in the school's policy for marking.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Many pupils, especially boys, have therefore developed very relaxed attitudes to their work. They know what they can 'get away with' and complete the minimum. Teachers do not insist on the highest quality of work so boys' achievement is not good enough.
- Pupils often do not complete the work set for them. Teachers do not insist that pupils return to finish work to a good standard. When pupils are absent they are not always expected to catch up on the work they have missed. As a result, too few pupils progress well over time and older pupils do not find the contents of their exercise books helpful when revising for their exams.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not built on routinely in subjects other than English and mathematics. In other subjects, their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not developed effectively.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and the skill with which they plan learning vary greatly across subjects. Too often, teachers do not identify the mistakes pupils make and adjust their teaching to make sure pupils are secure in their learning. When errors are identified, pupils do not always know what they need to do to correct them.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is highly variable.

Where it is stronger, for example in physical education, pupils engage, participate well and make good progress. Staff identify individuals' level of skill which they match to activities which helps pupils' development. However, this is not pupils' normal experience in a wide range of subjects.

- Homework is now being better used to support learning than in the past. It is not, however, well enough matched to the learning in class to help pupils deepen their understanding or explore topics more widely.
- Greater attention is now being given to developing pupils' reading. Pupils who read to inspectors read well and knew how to pronounce unfamiliar words. The daily private reading time is often the only time pupils, especially older pupils, will read.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- There is little evidence of how pupils' confidence and self-awareness are developed across the school. Pupils are not clear about how well they are progressing towards their learning targets. They lack strategies to help them understand how to get there or of any milestones by which they could check how well they are doing.
- Many staff have not been trained in the government's 'Prevent' duty and so do not understand the risks that pupils may face. Consequently, pupils have a very limited understanding of the risks from extremism or radicalisation.
- Leaders have not adequately assessed the risks for activities when pupils are off the school site. As a result, inspectors could not be assured that pupils' safety and well-being were adequately protected.
- Leaders do not make suitably thorough arrangements to ensure the safety and attendance of pupils who are on work experience. They do not receive attendance information quickly enough to assure themselves that pupils are safe.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils do not always engage well enough in their learning. Often resources used do not capture their interest or provide the structure needed for pupils to be able to successfully attempt their work. Subsequently, there can be low-level disruption in lessons.
- Teachers do not always address poor behaviour or attitudes in class quickly enough. Boys, in particular, often 'switch off' in lessons and are not sufficiently challenged by staff.
- Pupils' attendance has remained in line with the national average. However, the attendance of pupils in receipt of free school meals and that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is still too low compared to the national average. The attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent has been well below national levels for many years and has declined further in the last academic year.

- Exclusions have fallen overall since the previous inspection. However, the number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are excluded from school remains disproportionately high.
- There have been a high number of racist incidents. Leaders have not analysed this information to identify why this is the case and take actions to eradicate this.
- While there is some bullying, pupils and parents, who responded to Ofsted's online surveys, reported that this is usually dealt with quickly when it is brought to the attention of a member of staff.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the school and are polite to adults. They arrive at school in good time in the morning and move quickly and sensibly to their lessons.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Over a number of years, pupils have not made as much progress by the end of key stage 4 as other pupils nationally. In 2016, pupils' achievement at GCSE was well below the national average. This means they are not well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve less well than their peers and other pupils nationally. School data, when compared to the 2016 national performance measures, shows key stage 4 disadvantaged pupils achieved markedly less well than all pupils nationally. This group has achieved less well than other pupils for a number of years.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is not always well matched to the academic needs of pupils. The emphasis on pupils' pastoral care is not resulting in improvements in the progress pupils need to make if they are to catch up with other pupils.
- The proportion of the most able pupils achieving grades A\* to C in English and mathematics has fallen over the last five years. Work in pupils' books shows this trend is continuing. Furthermore, the number of the most able pupils achieving the highest grades at GCSE, in a range of subjects, has been low. Teachers acknowledge that the most able pupils are not routinely given sufficiently challenging work. In science, the most able pupils are not making the progress they should because teachers do not insist that work is completed to a higher standard.
- Pupils' work in English shows some improvement but this is not the case in all classes and their achievement is still well below national levels.
- Pupils are not making the progress that is expected of them in mathematics. Pupils do not act on the feedback when it is given and misconceptions sometimes go unchecked. Therefore, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not understand what they need to do to improve in this subject.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are looked after do not receive the support they need to achieve good academic outcomes. Teachers and other adults do not have all the information they need to plan learning to overcome any barriers these pupils may face.



- Careers advice and guidance is not well coordinated. Leaders do not help pupils make the links between the experiences they provide with pupils' aspirations for their futures. As a result, school data for pupils' destinations after they leave school at the end of key stage 4 shows a slight decline in the number who stay on in education, employment or training.
- Pupils make better progress in modern foreign languages and in technology. In graphics, the most able disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress as a result of the timely support they receive.

## School details

Unique reference number	131196
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10019962

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	997
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Edwards
Headteacher	Sue Banks
Telephone number	01793 705400
Website	<a href="http://www.isambard.swindon.sch.uk">www.isambard.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@isambard.swindon.sch.uk">admin@isambard.swindon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	26–27 November 2014

## Information about this school

- Isambard Community School is an average-sized secondary school. Pupils' prior attainment in all year groups is above the national average.
- The school and local authority are currently arranging additional support for the school from outside the borough.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is slightly below the national average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision for part of their studies at

either Swindon College or the Riverside Centre.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium strategy for the current academic year or Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding on its website. There was no complaints policy on the website and the special educational needs report does not contain all the information that is required.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across all year groups and in a wide range of subjects. In these lessons, inspectors also took the opportunity to look carefully at pupils' work and talk to them about their experiences at the school. Many of these lessons were observed jointly with members of the school's leadership team.
- Further work scrutiny was undertaken to assess pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and newly and recently qualified teachers.
- The lead inspector also met with the chair of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups to discuss their experience of the school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' achievement, minutes of the governing body meetings, school policies, pupils' files and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors considered the 98 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also reviewed the 62 responses to the online survey of pupils and of 68 members of staff at the school.

## Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Daniel Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Peck	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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