

Lordswood Boys' School

Hagley Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B17 8BJ

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils have underachieved considerably over time and improvement has not been secured quickly enough since the last inspection.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has been too slow and is significantly below that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. Funding to support the achievement of these pupils has not been used effectively to reduce differences with other pupils nationally.
- Very low levels of literacy present barriers to the progress of many pupils and the school's actions to improve this have not been effective enough.
- Low-level disruption still occurs in a small number of lessons; this prevents the flow of learning and slows progress.
- Some pupils who speak English as an additional language sometimes find it hard to complete the work provided for them by their teachers.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been inconsistent across different subjects and year groups. This has led to inadequate outcomes over time in a number of key subjects, including English, mathematics and humanities.
- Until recently, actions taken by leaders and managers have not secured improvement at a fast enough rate.
- Teachers' assessment of the progress that pupils make is not accurate enough across a range of different subjects.
- Some middle leaders' monitoring of pupils' work across their subject has been inconsistent and ineffective, although this has improved recently.
- Too many pupils do not act on their teachers' advice to improve their written work.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and other senior leaders have worked effectively and decisively to bring about a change in ethos in the school. This has contributed to rapid improvements in behaviour and also to pupils' attitudes in lessons.
- Attendance has increased markedly since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average.
- Senior leaders' recent robust action to strengthen the monitoring of teaching has led to improvements in teaching. As a result, pupils are now starting to make faster progress.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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?

- Raise the standards of achievement across the school so that all pupils make at least the progress they should from their different starting points by:
 - developing a cohesive approach to developing pupils' literacy skills that is clearly understood and followed by all teachers and pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers are given effective training so that they understand how best to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language and are also provided with appropriate resources to enable them to do so effectively
 - checking that all teachers' assessment is accurate and shows the current progress being made by pupils towards suitably challenging targets
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the school's assessment policy and that pupils systematically act on guidance given to them to improve their work
 - checking that all pupils understand the specific steps they need to take to improve further in each subject that they study
 - strengthening the teaching of lower-ability pupils to support their progress, by ensuring that learning resources are suitably designed to ensure that full understanding is gained
 - challenging and stretching the most able pupils to raise their aspirations and to seek to achieve the highest grades
 - continuing to improve behaviour further and ensuring that no lessons are disrupted, by implementing an agreed approach to behaviour management that is understood and followed by all staff.
- Improve the performance of leaders and managers and ensure that all work effectively and collaboratively towards school improvement by:
 - building an accurate system that monitors groups of pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, across different subjects over time and allows for timely and effective interventions to take place when pupils are not making good progress
 - making certain that senior leaders and governors evaluate rigorously how pupil premium funding is used to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - developing further the capacity of middle leaders to accurately monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their subject areas
 - effectively targeting training opportunities for teachers to help them to better understand how literacy barriers can best be overcome to support pupils' progress in different subjects

- developing closer links with parents and carers so that they can more effectively support their children to make stronger progress at school.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers were too slow to take effective action to improve the school following the last inspection and this has led to pupils underachieving considerably over time.
- However, in recent months, significant changes to senior leadership have helped to begin to address the significant problems facing the school. The newly appointed headteacher has worked decisively to bring about a rapid change in the atmosphere around the school and has effectively shared his vision that pupils should 'learn, believe, succeed'. These swift actions have galvanised staff and pupils to work together more effectively to bring about faster improvement and have also greatly improved morale.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by undertaking reviews of progress at different points in the year. However, the quality of the reviews and the actions taken as a result are variable and they have not been effective in some subjects.
- Leaders do not always make the best use of assessment information. The records the school holds about the current progress made by pupils have been inaccurate in a number of subjects over time. This means that leaders have not been able to specifically target guidance to individual pupils and groups to help them to improve. New systems have been introduced recently which are much more effective, but work remains to ensure they are fully understood and applied by all teachers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, although the courses provided for pupils have not helped them to achieve well enough, particularly lower-ability pupils. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is too narrow and there are only limited chances for pupils to develop their interests away from lessons.
- Leaders have not used the pupil premium funding to good effect. They have not fully evaluated which strategies have been effective in bringing about improvements in achievement for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils, including those who are most able, continue to underachieve considerably when compared to pupils with the same starting points nationally.
- Over time, support from Lordswood Academies Trust has not helped to secure rapid enough improvement. In the last year, additional leadership and teaching capacity provided by the trust has been withdrawn. Nonetheless, the executive headteacher continues to provide valued mentoring and support for the newly appointed headteacher.
- Over time, there has been too much ineffective middle leadership in key departments, including in English, mathematics and humanities. Senior leaders are aware of the extent of this problem and the actions they have taken are now beginning to successfully strengthen middle leadership.
- Leaders have not worked quickly enough to address the significant barriers to learning that many pupils face due to their low levels of literacy. School leaders have made it a key priority for improvement. They have put careful plans in place to secure faster improvement in this crucial area.

- Leaders and teachers have found it difficult to engage successfully with parents and carers. The school has stopped parents' evenings due to very low attendance and has recently replaced them with phone calls with parents to discuss pupils' progress. Only four parents responded to the Parent View questionnaire as part of the inspection.
- Due to the decisive action taken by school leaders, pupils' behaviour has improved markedly since the last inspection. Pupils have a growing sense of pride in their school.
- Although inadequacies in teaching remain, there are also some clear signs of improvement, particularly in key stage 3. Systems for checking the performance of teachers have improved. This has helped leaders tackle weak teaching more effectively. As a result, teaching and outcomes for some current pupils are improving, although this is still inconsistent across different year groups and subjects.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, governors have faced considerable barriers as they have sought to support and challenge senior leaders to address inadequate practice at the school. The number of pupils has fallen and there has been turbulence in staffing, both among teachers and leaders. However, governors successfully secured leadership for the school by appointing the new headteacher in May 2016 and have supported him effectively as he begins to address the key weaknesses of the school.
- While governors are aware of the significant differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally with the same starting points, they have a limited understanding about how this problem can be successfully addressed. They have not held school leaders to account for their use of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding and have not fully evaluated which actions taken are most likely to prove successful.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- In discussion with inspectors, teachers and leaders demonstrated a well-developed understanding of the importance of their work in keeping children safe. Training in this area has been very effective in highlighting the specific risks that pupils may face and in ensuring that all staff take full responsibility for safeguarding. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and also demonstrate a thorough understanding of risks and how to counter them.
- Pupils show a clear understanding of the importance of treating all people equally, regardless of their characteristics.
- Pupils demonstrate a firm knowledge of British values and also understand how developing them can help to support their successful future lives in modern Britain.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Since the last inspection there have been substantial changes in staffing, with a large number of teachers leaving their positions. This turmoil has had an adverse impact on teaching over time and has undoubtedly contributed to inadequate outcomes for pupils.
- The teaching of literacy across different subjects has been and continues to be not good enough. Many pupils face substantial barriers to their learning, but too many

teachers do not understand how best to help these pupils to improve their skills. This has greatly reduced pupils' ability to make progress across a range of subjects over time.

- There is too much inconsistency in teaching across different subjects and different years. As a result, pupils in some classes make good progress, whereas in other classes this is not the case due to inadequate teaching over time.
- Some teachers do not have accurate information about the current progress being made by their pupils. This is a significant problem as it means they are not always able to provide pupils with individual guidance to help them to know how to improve.
- In discussion with inspectors, it was clear that not all pupils were aware of the precise steps needed to improve their work. Teaching over time has not successfully supported pupils to develop this knowledge.
- Pupils of lower ability frequently struggle to access learning materials during the inspection. Teachers have been too slow to take action to address this and this has resulted in these pupils making very limited progress over time.
- Higher-ability pupils are not challenged appropriately in lessons. The work set by many teachers is too easy for them and this affects their ability to reach the highest grades. This then reduces their opportunities to secure the most competitive education and employment opportunities in the future.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are not consistently supported to make the rapid gains in understanding necessary for them to make good progress. Although there are now some effective systems in place to support these pupils, some do not have sufficient support in lessons. As a result, a number of pupils were observed being unable to successfully complete the work set by their teachers. This is typical.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work across subjects demonstrates that work is too often not finished and, even when asked by their teacher, pupils do not take active steps to catch up.
- School leaders require teachers to set targets for pupils when marking their work and to expect pupils to act on the advice set, including in literacy, to improve their work. However, inspectors found that this practice was inconsistent and that, on too many occasions, it did not happen. Therefore pupils continued to make the same mistakes.
- Pupils are encouraged to show positive attitudes to learning and they generally respond well to this expectation. Consistently supportive relationships were observed between teachers and pupils.
- In the most effective teaching, teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge and used questioning effectively to help pupils to develop their understanding. This happens most often in lessons in key stage 3.
- Pupils reported to inspectors that the setting of homework has become much more consistent recently. They spoke positively about how the new online 'Show My Homework' system helps them to fully understand what is required from them when completing work away from school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not have enough pride in their work to ensure that they make good progress in different subjects. This aspect has improved since the last inspection, but there remains significant work to do to ensure that all pupils respond appropriately to their teachers' guidance about how to improve their work.
- Low levels of literacy, including difficulty in articulating their views orally, restrict pupils' personal development and their likely opportunities in the future.
- In discussion with inspectors, pupils showed a clear understanding of the specific risks facing them and could explain the steps they need to take to stay safe. For example, they understood the risks of radicalisation and had experienced useful opportunities to discuss this during their time with their form group.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural education of the pupils is well planned across the curriculum, and through assemblies and form time. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to raise their aspirations about what they are capable of achieving in their future lives.
- The provision of careers advice and guidance is proving effective. Pupils are well guided in their decision making about suitable further education and employment opportunities after leaving school.
- Pupils were open and forthcoming with inspectors during informal discussions as part of the inspection. They typically demonstrated positive manners and conduct, both in their own social areas, as well as in communal areas around the school.
- Different groups of pupils get along well with each other and this contributes to a cohesive school community.
- The vast majority of pupils look smart in their recently redesigned uniform.
- Pupils spoke positively about how newly introduced commendations and merits help to motivate them to do better and how they value the receipt of these awards in assemblies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour depends on the quality of teaching that they receive. When teaching is weak, there is too much low-level disruption and off-task chat among the pupils which prevents them from making good progress. However, when teaching is better, learning is much more effective and pupils show that they can behave appropriately and do well.
- Not all teachers use the school's behaviour management systems consistently to ensure that pupils behave appropriately at all times in lessons.
- Inspectors observed the majority of pupils behaving well. Pupils responded sensibly to instructions from their teachers and showed the ability to get along well with each other, as well as with their teachers and other staff.
- Pupils report that behaviour has greatly improved since the last inspection thanks to the decisive action taken by the new headteacher. Prior to this, there was too much

poor behaviour which created a disorderly atmosphere around the school.

- The numbers of pupils excluded from school due to poor behaviour has reduced considerably since the last inspection. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Since the last inspection weak teaching has led to poor outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' examination results in 2014 and 2015 were below the government's minimum expectations. Information for 2016 suggests that the school will again remain below these floor standards.
- The progress made by pupils across many subjects, including in English, mathematics and humanities, is well below that which is expected based on their starting points.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is too slow and well behind that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. Nonetheless, there has been recent improvement, and attainment increased for these pupils in 2016 when compared to previous years. However, the differences with other pupils nationally are not diminishing quickly enough, including for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Some pupils who speak English as an additional language make inadequate progress over time due to a lack of support in lessons, meaning that they struggle to fully understand learning materials.
- Lower-ability pupils are not consistently supported well in lessons. As a result, they make much slower progress than is expected when compared to similar pupils nationally.
- The attainment of the most able pupils improved in 2016, although many did not make good enough progress and achieve their potential. This is because they are not consistently challenged and supported to reach the highest grades.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved because of consistent and effective support provided. Although progress for these pupils is still too slow in key stage 4, it is much stronger in key stage 3.
- The school has introduced a structured reading programme in key stage 3 and this is helping some pupils who need to catch up.
- Records provided by the school indicate that the current Year 11 pupils will achieve better results and make faster progress this year. Senior leaders have sought external validation for these predictions, but inspectors could not confirm the accuracy of this information.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work across a range of subjects, and in different years, showed that inconsistencies in pupils' progress remain. This is because the quality of teaching is variable in different subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	139157
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10019977

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dagmar Sharples
Headteacher	George Koutsou
Telephone number	0121 464 2837
Website	http://www.lordswoodboys.co.uk/
Email address	lbs-enquiry@lordswoodtrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Lordswood Boys' School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Numbers on roll have fallen considerably in recent years. It has been part of Lordswood Academies Trust since 2013.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2016. There have been considerable changes in teaching staff in the past two years and eight teachers remain since the last inspection.
- Pupils are from a diverse range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also well above the national average and this

includes a significant minority who are at a very early stage of learning the language.

- In all years, pupils' prior attainment is well below the national average overall.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- Approximately half of the school's pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is well above the national average.
- The number of pupils who enter or leave the school at different points of the school year is higher than the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons in order to evaluate the impact of teaching, learning and assessment over time. Ten of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was sampled in all lessons and inspectors also analysed samples of pupils' work from the previous school year.
- An inspector observed a lesson where pupils who speak English as an additional language were being helped to improve, and then listened to these same pupils read.
- A range of school-provided documents were examined, including the school's self-evaluation, information on the current progress made by pupils, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to how pupils are supported in keeping safe.
- Meetings were held with pupils across Years 7 to 11 and their views were also sought informally during break and lunchtime, as well as during lessons.
- Meetings were held with three members of the local governing body, all of whom are also trustees at Lordswood Academies Trust. Discussions also took place with the executive headteacher from the trust, as well as school senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors considered the responses of four parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Walton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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