

Waverley Studio College

470 Belchers Lane, Bordesley Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B9 5SX

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

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	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal's strong leadership and clear vision of excellence has been instrumental in promoting an ambitious culture in the school, and one where British values are a key influence across the curriculum.
- The very strong sense of community among all staff, whether leaders, teachers or support staff, means that all are pulling in the same direction: to improve pupil outcomes.
- The school keeps pupils safe and ensures that they are well informed about any risks that they may face.
- Teachers create calm and productive learning environments that motivate pupils to learn well and make rapid progress. However, sometimes pupils are not sufficiently stretched because work is not always matched to different abilities and teachers' questioning is not always challenging enough.
- Pupils behave very well around the school and in lessons. They show respect for each other, for staff and for visitors. They value their school and the support it provides for them.
- The support provided by learning coaches has been a key factor in the improvements that have taken place in pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Attendance is above the national average and continues to improve.
- The rapid rate of improvement in pupils' progress at key stage 4, although from a very low base, is being sustained over time. However, the overall rate of progress in 2016 remained just below the government's current floor standard. The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing rapidly, but it is still too wide. School data about current cohorts indicates that female pupils are making more rapid progress than male pupils.
- In the sixth form, value-added progress is well above, or at least in line with, the national average and students consistently attain the highest possible grades. The close links between the regular work experience that sixth-form students undertake and their vocational courses are key contributors to their good achievement.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Leaders recognise that such work needs to be constantly reviewed to ensure that pupils' basic skills improve rapidly to enable them to succeed in subjects.

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?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' performance by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons at key stage 4, learning activities are matched well to pupils' abilities and challenge them to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding so that they can achieve at the highest level
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning consistently challenges students at both key stage 4 and 5 to think more deeply and encourages them to develop more sophisticated oral skills.
- Sustain the improvements made in the achievement of key stage 4 pupils. Do this by ensuring that:
 - all pupils make progress that is at least in line with national averages
 - male pupils make as good progress as female pupils
 - the difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is removed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal provides strong leadership and is an excellent role model. She has a clear vision of excellence for the school and high expectations of staff and of pupils. She has been instrumental in promoting a culture of high aspirations to drive the necessary school improvement.
- There is a very strong sense of community among staff, including leaders, teachers and support staff, and all are pulling in the same direction to improve pupil outcomes.
- Leadership capacity is strong, particularly since the appointment of a permanent vice-principal and a head of science. The confidence of middle leaders is growing because of the strong support and clear accountability structures that are in place. Some middle leaders have been given whole-school responsibilities, such as curriculum development, assessment and safeguarding, which is providing them with important professional development opportunities and is contributing to improving leadership capacity further.
- Effective procedures to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have resulted in significant improvements to the quality of provision, the impact of which can be seen in the strong and sustained improvements to pupils' achievement. Appropriate support and development opportunities are provided for senior and middle leaders, and for teachers and support staff.
- A rigorous process of performance management is now in place, which is moderated across the trust.
- Accurate self-evaluation, clear priorities and improvement planning that informs the school's strategic direction are helping leaders to keep focused on the school's improvement agenda.
- The curriculum meets studio school requirements and is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet pupils' educational and vocational needs. It provides them with opportunities to develop and extend their interests through a range of worthwhile enrichment activities. In addition, all pupils participate in timetabled days exploring and working towards a level 1 award on understanding British values. School leaders are integrating effectively the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum with promoting British values and with the studio school's CREATE framework. This framework is integrated well with careers advice, work experience and the development of work-related skills. Work experience is undertaken by all pupils in Year 10 and in the sixth form. This and the effective advice and guidance provided are preparing pupils well for the next steps in their education and employment.
- The improvements to all areas of the school are resulting in a growing positive reputation for the school. As a result, the number of pupils enrolled in the school during this current academic year is a third greater than last year, with many more students enrolling in the sixth form. The school's own surveys of parents' views indicate strongly positive responses regarding the quality of education provided.

- Waverley Education Foundation Trust provides the school with a range of effective support that ensures consistency of approach across the trust. For example, it ensures safe recruitment, maintains the single central record, and ensures that relevant staff have a suitable source of advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding and support for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has forged valuable links with a number of schools, in addition to its links with the lead school in the trust. This enables regular external moderation of assessment to take place, which ensures the accuracy of attainment and progress information. It also provides good opportunities for sharing good practice and effective collaboration in various subject areas.
- The school acted promptly and effectively on the review of pupil premium funding required by the last inspection. Resources are now directed specifically at pupils who are eligible, and detailed analysis of the impact of strategies ensure that funding is used as effectively as possible. This is evident in the performance of disadvantaged pupils, whose achievement, although still below that of other pupils nationally, is not different to other pupils in the school and has shown rapid and consistent improvement over time.
- The school has effective strategies in place to support pupils who require extra help with literacy. Ongoing improvements in pupils' reading ages reflect this. However, leaders recognise that there is a need to continue to focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills across subjects to ensure that pupils are provided with the basic skills that they need to access the curriculum quickly and successfully. This is linked to the fact that most pupils enter the school with very low prior attainment, and over a quarter of pupils in Year 10 have only recently arrived in the United Kingdom (UK) and are in the very early stages of learning English. The trust has ensured that a specialist teaching assistant now supports pupils in the very early stages of learning English. The impact of this is positive in terms of their increasing confidence and ability to communicate but it is too early to judge impact in terms of progress and achievement more formally.

Governance of the school

- The review of governance required by the last inspection has had a positive impact on this aspect of the school's leadership. Governors' knowledge and understanding of their role has developed well over the last year as a result of effective internal and external training. Governors are very committed to the school and its ambitions for pupils. Minutes of recent governor meetings indicate that more-challenging questions are being asked about a range of issues pertinent to school priorities and the trust's responsibilities to move the school forwards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory requirements are in place in relation to safeguarding. Staff with responsibility for safeguarding work closely with the specialist safeguarding link person in the trust. Links with the local authority and other relevant agencies are strong. Internal processes are robust and ensure that the recording of incidents, monitoring and securing necessary interventions for any safeguarding concerns are dealt with

effectively. The school has implemented a carefully thought out strategy to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. All staff and governors are appropriately trained, and child protection and 'Prevent' information are routinely provided to staff and others through regular professional development opportunities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- School records indicate that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been improving over time. Lesson observations during the inspection supported this and there was clear evidence in pupils' books and portfolios of the good progress that they are making.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to design engaging learning activities. They create calm and productive learning environments in their classrooms. They use information about pupils' achievement effectively to plan their teaching and to determine appropriate help for pupils needing additional support. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and respond well to teachers' encouragement. They say they feel very well supported by their teachers, who they say 'go out of their way' to help them.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' marking and feedback follow school policy consistently and effectively. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. This is enabling them to make more rapid progress. Assessment is accurate and is reflected in the close correlation between teachers' estimates of pupils' attainment and actual attainment in 2015 and 2016.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning, particularly in their support of those that are underperforming, are vulnerable or are at the very early stages of learning English.
- Where teachers' questioning is strong, it encourages pupils to think deeply and respond at length. For example, in a GCSE physics lesson, the teacher insisted on precise thinking and the correct use of scientific vocabulary. Questioning was used skilfully to probe pupils' responses and to encourage them to think deeply about the topic. However, questioning is not always challenging enough. Expectations about the quality of oral responses are not always high enough and sometimes teachers accept simple, one-word utterances or very brief and superficial answers. As a result, not all pupils are given opportunities to develop deep thinking skills or the ability and confidence to provide extended responses.
- Pupils take their studies seriously and respond well to high levels of challenge when this is provided. For example, in a Year 10 business lesson on the functional areas of a business, the teacher's effective planning and strong subject knowledge were used to challenge pupils with different abilities to learn well and to sustain their interest. The teacher used everyday examples, including reference to cultural traditions, to keep pupils engaged. As a result, behaviour for learning was positive and pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of new concepts well. However, in some lessons at key stage 4, challenge is not always strong enough to enable pupils to make as rapid progress as they are capable of.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are self-confident individuals. They understand what it means to be successful learners and are determined to be so. Learning coaches are highly respected by pupils for the moral support that they provide and the positive impact their encouragement has on pupils' self-esteem. The support they provide has been a key factor in improvements in behaviour and attendance.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride and talk with feeling about how they want to live up to the high expectations that staff have of their behaviour and what they can achieve.
- The school has effective systems in place to support the educational and pastoral needs of the relatively small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their support plans are detailed, appropriately monitored and are used effectively to accelerate individuals' progress.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. They know about and understand the importance of keeping themselves safe in varying situations and can identify an appropriate person they could talk to if they needed help or advice. They understand risk and the importance of looking after each other. There is a strong sense of unity among them as members of the school community. Aspects of safeguarding, such as e-safety, knife crime, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, the risks of radicalisation and extremism are all dealt with sensitively and effectively by the school. All pupils were clear that bullying was not an issue in the school but that if it happened it would be dealt with quickly by teachers.
- Alternative provision is no longer used because leaders judge that individual pupils benefit more from the personalised curriculum and support programmes provided by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School records indicate significant improvement in pupils' behaviour. Pupils are self-disciplined and conduct themselves very well around the school and in lessons. They show respect for each other, for staff and for visitors. They value their school and the support it provides for them. Well-established routines both in lessons and around the school ensure a calm and productive environment.
- Although there were isolated incidents of teachers having to check an individual pupils' attitudes, no incidents of low-level disruption in the classroom were seen by inspectors.
- Exclusions have fallen rapidly since 2015, as have bullying and racist incidents.
- Attendance has been sustained above the national average since September 2015 and continues to improve. Attendance officers and learning coaches provide a highly effective and rapid response to pupil absence. This prompt, daily response

not only contributes to improving the rate of attendance but also to keeping pupils safe. The school's emphasis on non-attendance resulting in 'lost learning time' reinforces the importance of good attendance for pupils and their parents. Persistent absence has been reducing significantly over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Provisional national data and the school's own data indicate that attainment and the progress made by pupils in Year 11 have improved significantly since 2015. Improvements are from a very low base but are significant and school data about current pupils indicates that this rate of improvement is continuing. For example, 7% of pupils gained GCSEs in English and mathematics, at grades C or above, in 2015. In 2016, 27% of pupils gained these qualifications at this threshold. Current school predictions are that 42% will attain a grade C or above in these qualifications in 2017.
- While the overall progress made by pupils in 2016 at -0.59 remained below the government's current floor standard, it improved from a very low base in 2015. Current school predictions indicate that the progress result will rise to +0.27 in 2017, which is well above the current floor standard.
- The performance of pupils in vocational courses at level 2 is better than in level 2 English and mathematics academic courses. This indicates the need for a strong, continuing focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, particularly for those at the early stages of learning English and those who have poor basic skills on entry.
- A large proportion of pupils join the school with reading ages well below their chronological age. In addition, over a quarter of the current Year 10 pupils joined the school in the very early stages of learning English. A range of strategies are in place to support and develop their literacy skills. These are having a positive impact in raising reading ages and improving pupils' writing and presentation skills. However, leaders recognise that more still needs to be done on a cross-subject level to ensure that all pupils are able to succeed quickly in their academic subjects.
- There are few differences between the outcomes of different groups of pupils. The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, who form approximately half of the pupils in the school, and other pupils nationally is diminishing rapidly because of the more effective use of pupil premium funding. However, it is still too large. Published data indicates that the rate of progress of middle ability pupils was not as rapid as that made by the least able and most able pupils. This is not the case for current cohorts. However, school information about current cohorts does indicate that female pupils are making more rapid progress than male pupils.
- The school works effectively to ensure that pupils in Year 11 are well prepared for their next steps. As a result almost all Year 11 pupils move to education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Sixth-form achievement has been consistently good and current students are achieving very well. Despite low attainment on entry to the sixth form, students consistently reach the highest grades in the level 3 BTEC courses that they study. The progress they make, as shown in value-added progress data, is mostly significantly above, and never below, the national average. The close links between the regular work experience that students undertake and their vocational courses are key contributors to their good achievement.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of sixth-form students are good. Through the curriculum, the school provides them with good opportunities to develop their basic skills and self-confidence. The retention of students between Years 12 and 13 is good. The school works effectively to ensure that students in the sixth form are well prepared for their next steps. As a result, almost all move to education, employment or training when they leave the school. Work experience is well managed and monitored in terms of students' performance and the quality of placements, and close attention is given to safeguarding matters. The curricular specialisms at key stage 5, and their vocational focus, enable those students who wish to, to move on successfully to higher education or apprenticeship schemes.
- Sixth-form leadership is good. It is no different to leadership overall and systems and processes are the same. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and use this, and their expertise in relation to the examination and syllabus specifications followed, to teach, support and guide students in such a way as to ensure that students make excellent progress – as indicated by the high value-added scores achieved. Students' work, in each of the sixth-form subjects, but particularly in health and social care, indicates clearly why their performance has earned the school such positive level 3 value-added scores. There are similar strengths in teaching and learning as those at key stage 4. Teachers' questioning in terms of one-to-one support for sixth-form students is generally probing, incisive and development. However, it is less challenging when applied to whole-class teaching, when simplistic oral responses from students tend to be accepted too readily.
- More than half of all students who joined Year 12 in 2016 need to resit level 2 English and/or mathematics. Provision for GCSE English and mathematics resits is well planned and effective and school evidence suggests that pupils are making suitable progress towards improving their grades. Attendance at these lessons is not always as good as it could be. The school is aware of this and takes appropriate action to address this.

School details

Unique reference number	139788
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10025504

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.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Worledge
Principal	Ms Sofia Darr
Telephone number	0121 5666622
Website	www.waverleystudiocollege.co.uk
Email address	Sofia.Darr@waverleystudiocollege.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is part of the Waverley Education Foundation Trust, the lead school of which is Waverley School. The chief executive officer of the school is a national leader of education. The school works with, and has received support from, a number of

schools, beside Waverley School.

- The school does not use alternative providers for any of its pupils.
- Almost all pupils in the school are from minority ethnic groups and almost half of all pupils are Pakistani.
- Almost 80% of pupils, well above the national average, speak English as an additional language. In 2016, over a quarter of pupils entering Year 10 were recent arrivals to the UK and were in the very earliest stages of learning English.
- Almost half of pupils in the school are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average.
- A relatively small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities compared to the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, all staff in the school were either observed teaching, included in a range of discussions, or had the quality of their pupils' work reviewed. Observations and visits to classrooms were carried out by inspectors individually and jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, visits were made to form periods and to an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the principal, members of the senior and middle leadership teams, with teachers, pupils and with pastoral staff. Meetings were also held with the chief executive officer of the trust and with the chair of governors.
- School records about safeguarding, pupils' progress, their attendance and their behaviour were scrutinised. Minutes of the meetings held by the governing body were reviewed, as were reports following the reviews of governance and of the use of pupil premium funding. The school's improvement plans and its self-evaluation document were evaluated.
- No questionnaire responses were available on Parent View but inspectors considered the school's own survey evidence about the views of parents, pupils and staff.`

Inspection team

Gwen Coates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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