

North Bromsgrove High School

School Drive, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1BA

Inspection dates

15–17 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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 school that requires improvement

- Although key improvements have been secured across the school, there is more work to do in ensuring that pupils' outcomes are consistently good.
- The pupil premium funding is not used well enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well across all year groups.
- The quality of teaching is variable across the school and is not yet securely good.
- Questioning is not used consistently well to help deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teaching does not always challenge pupils, particularly the most able.
- Guidance provided to teachers to help support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with their learning is not used consistently well.
- Pupils' literacy skills need further development. Beyond that seen in English, extended writing is rarely seen in pupils' books.
- The quality of teachers' feedback in books is inconsistent and this limits pupils' progress.
- Attendance is lower than the national average. Persistent absence is above the national average and is particularly high for disadvantaged pupils.
- While there is some very recent improvement, the number of fixed-term exclusions is above the national average. The number of fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils is disproportionately high.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors provide strong leadership, which is valued by staff, pupils, parents and carers. Staff morale is high.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes well to the development of pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- Safeguarding is well led. Pupils say they feel safe in school and staff and parents agree.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at unstructured times. They are developing into confident, articulate learners.
- The sixth form is well led. Students are well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.

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 leadership and management by ensuring that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in all year groups.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby pupils' outcomes, by making sure that:
 - all pupils, particularly the most able, are consistently challenged to make good progress
 - regular opportunities are provided for pupils to extend the quality and quantity of their writing
 - all teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - all teachers provide effective feedback that will help pupils to improve their work
 - all teachers use the guidance provided for them to help improve the outcomes for pupils with SEND.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - working with parents to improve the attendance of pupils who are regularly absent, in particular disadvantaged pupils, so that these pupils make better progress
 - continuing to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the local authority took rapid and decisive action to secure effective leadership of the school. Two executive interim headteachers were appointed, initially on a part-time basis. From October 2018, one of these became full-time and the second continued to support the school by working two days per week.
- The local authority further strengthened the leadership of the school by appointing an interim executive board in October 2018.
- Together with further successful appointments at a senior leadership level and inspired by the two interim headteachers, all leaders share a commitment to an ambitious vision for the school's work. As a result, they have created a culture of tolerance and respect.
- Leaders and governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Decisive action since the last inspection has secured improvement in many aspects of the school's work. For example, the appointment of senior leaders into key positions has resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' conduct.
- Leaders invest heavily in providing high-quality professional development and training for staff. Professional development is used to encourage, challenge and support teachers' performance. Staff value this training.
- Leaders regularly analyse teachers' performance and act quickly to tackle any underperformance they identify. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving. However, the consistent lack of high-quality questioning that goes beyond, for example, that used for recall is failing to challenge the most able pupils.
- Support from a local teaching alliance to work with developing middle leaders is contributing effectively to the school's improvement. For example, the marks achieved by Year 11 pupils in their recent speaking examination in modern foreign languages were significantly better than those from the previous year.
- Pastoral middle leaders form an effective team. They have a good knowledge of individual pupils' needs and they ensure that pupils and their families benefit from the support available from external agencies. A typical comment from a pupil about leaders was 'They care about us.' Most parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, say their child is well looked after and cared for in school.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum. Pupils choose an appropriate pathway based on their aptitude and interests. All pathways are aspirational. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with an appropriate mix of both academic and vocational subjects, and this is helping to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.
- The wider curriculum also contributes well to pupils' mental and personal well-being, their safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A range of extra-curricular activities are on offer, including ski trips abroad and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils speak enthusiastically about these opportunities.

- The provision for pupils with SEND is well led. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides staff with information about individual pupils' additional needs and strategies to use in the classroom to help meet these needs. However, while most staff's planning identifies these pupils and their needs, the strategies are not used consistently well by staff.
- Leaders effectively monitor the quality of alternative provision. They have ensured that the high quality of care given to pupils at the school is matched in alternative provision. The pupils who access that provision follow an appropriate curriculum and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Leaders have a plan for the spending of pupil premium funding. However, a number of the proposed actions lack measurable success criteria, which makes it difficult for governors to question leaders about how successful their actions have been. In addition, most actions this year have been focused on improving outcomes for Year 11 only.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to securing further improvements. They have the experience, knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles well.
- Governors provide an appropriate mix of support and challenge for leaders. For example, they hold middle leaders of underperforming subjects effectively to account. Middle leaders are invited to governors' meetings to report on the actions they are taking to secure improvements in their subjects. At the same time, governors offer middle leaders help and support to enable them to meet with success.
- Governors take their safeguarding duties seriously. They have a named governor for safeguarding whose responsibility includes routinely checking the single central record. They ensure that the vetting procedure for employing new staff is robust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective in both the school and in alternative provision.
- Leadership of safeguarding is strong. An external review of safeguarding, carried out in January 2018, identified a few minor areas for improvement. These have all been effectively addressed. As a result, the school's good practice has been recognised by the local authority, who have plans to share aspects of the school's practice across the county.
- Training for staff is up to date. Recent training includes topics such as female genital mutilation and children missing from education. Record-keeping for the recruitment of staff is thorough and precise. Pupils' records are securely stored. There is appropriate filtering of the internet. The school's single central record is complete and well organised. The procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are understood and used well.
- Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils are taught about e-safety, relationships, sex education and mental health. Leaders respond to local issues appropriately. For

example, they have planned a workshop for pupils later in the year on crime in society that may affect young people.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. However, there is variability in the quality of some practice.
- When learning activities are well within pupils' capabilities, teachers are not yet adjusting learning so that the level of challenge can be increased. The level of challenge that pupils receive, particularly the most able groups, is not yet high enough. Similarly, on occasion, activities are too challenging and information provided by the SENCo, for example, is not used effectively to support pupils' additional needs.
- Work in books generally shows that pupils are making progress over time. However, missing or incomplete work in books is often unchallenged by teachers. The quality of feedback provided by teachers to help pupils improve their work is inconsistent. The quality of pupils' responses to this feedback is variable. All these factors are hindering pupils' progress.
- Teachers use basic questioning well to check pupils' understanding and link learning to previous lessons. Pupils are articulate and confident in answering questions directed to them by their teacher. Pupils' use of subject-specific terminology is developing well in art and physical education. However, high-quality questioning to deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge is not used consistently well.
- Pupils' literacy skills require further development. While the introduction of a weekly literacy lesson for Year 9 is improving some pupils' reading age, work in books across groups and subjects shows a lack of creativity in pupils' work, as well as a lack of extended pieces of writing.
- Parents are provided with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing. The information provided clearly explains how well their child is doing in terms of both the academic standards expected and their attitude to learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Established routines, which begin at the start of the school day with the form teacher's 'roll call', set the tone. This positive approach continues throughout the day, both in classrooms and in unstructured times. Staff help pupils to conduct themselves well. The school is calm and orderly.
- The school is proud of its inclusive ethos, where every pupil is valued and cared for. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have every confidence that, when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and look smart. They are friendly and courteous.

They are proud of their school and look after the school environment. As a result, the school's buildings are free from litter and graffiti.

- Staff and pupils have purposeful relationships based on mutual respect. Pupils say they have access to a trusted adult who they can talk to. Pupils in the resource base say that they are happy and enjoy school. They value the quiet space that the base offers at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Leaders monitor carefully the well-being of pupils who attend alternative provision. They track these pupils' attendance and progress. Leaders keep in regular contact with these providers to ensure that pupils are safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Fixed-term exclusions are above the national average and are not reducing over time. While this sanction is having a positive impact on improving behaviour, pupils lose learning time as a result. The number of fixed-term exclusions for pupils with SEND is relatively high. A disproportionate number of fixed-term exclusions are issued to disadvantaged pupils.
- Overall attendance is below the national average and is not improving significantly over time. It is recognised that the school has above-average mid-year admissions, which has a detrimental effect on attendance. However, although attendance is improving slightly for pupils with SEND and for disadvantaged pupils, their attendance remains below that of their peers.
- Persistent absence is above the national average and is not improving over time. Persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils is high and this is hindering their progress. While leaders and governors have prioritised improving attendance for key groups, it is too early to see the impact of their actions.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes, although low, are beginning to show some improvement. In 2018 for example, the proportion of pupils who achieved a standard pass in both GCSE English and GCSE mathematics almost matched the national average. However, this improvement is not consistent across all subjects.
- Leaders systematically track and monitor pupils' progress. Leaders' current assessment information is indicating that pupils' outcomes and progress from their starting points will improve further this year. For example, this year's Year 11 art examination results have improved significantly compared to the previous year. Robust internal and external moderation gives reliability and validity to teachers' assessments.
- The difference in progress made by pupils with SEND compared to pupils from similar starting points is showing some signs of improvement. However, the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils compared to that of other pupils with the same starting points is not improving quickly enough.
- Pupils receive effective impartial careers advice and guidance. There is strong support

from the local authority. A range of activities help to inform pupils' choices, including trips to the skills show, visits to universities and a planned programme in tutor time to provide careers guidance and advice.

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment. Virtually all pupils, including all those with SEND, progressed to appropriate post-16 provision last year.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Post-16 provision is well led. The head of post-16 has high expectations and works diligently to support pupils' academic and personal progress. Students value this support.
- In 2018, students whose starting points were low made better progress than other groups of students. Leaders' decisive action to improve the inconsistency in the quality of teaching is making a difference. Assessment information for current students shows that most students, including disadvantaged students and those with SEND, are making progress.
- The few students who did not attain GCSE grades A* to C (reformed grades 9 to 4) in either English or mathematics are supported effectively. All students this year have successfully achieved these qualifications.
- Teaching is well planned to meet the needs of individuals. Effective targeted questioning, for example in English and history, helps to deepen students' knowledge and their understanding of subject content. Teachers are ambitious for students to achieve their best. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment in the post-16 provision are of a high quality.
- The retention rates for students are high.
- Students benefit from an effective careers education programme. It includes visits to university open days and weekly support sessions for those students considering applying for an apprenticeship. The latter includes visits from staff at a local engineering firm. As a result, last year, all students went on to sustained higher education or apprenticeships.
- Learners develop strong personal, social and employability skills. All students in Year 12 complete a week's work experience. The enrichment programme that all students follow also offers students the opportunity to pursue bespoke extended work placements. For example, students interested in teaching benefit from the placements offered by some local middle and first schools.
- The school is a champion school for the national citizenship service. In 2017, 30 students were successful in gaining employment with the service. This year, eight of these students have been promoted to team leaders.
- Students are good role models for younger pupils. They willingly undertake roles of responsibility, including head student, deputy head student and tour guides for visitors, and they take front-of-house duties at parents' evenings. Their charity work includes supporting a local group for older people.

School details

Unique reference number	116928
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10056636

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	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	828
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	64
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Ms Anja Potze
Headteacher	Mr Nick Gibson
Telephone number	01527 872 375
Website	www.northbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	nbhs@northbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2018

Information about this school

- The full-time interim executive headteacher has recently been appointed as the permanent headteacher.
- The school has a resource provision for 10 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.

- Off-site alternative provision is currently offered on both a full-time and part-time basis for a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 at Bournville College, Aspire and Academy21.
- The school has been supported by the local authority and a local teaching alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with: the headteacher; other senior leaders and middle leaders; staff from the school; members of the governing body; the director of the local teaching alliance; and representatives from the local authority.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone to representatives from two of the school's alternative providers.
- Inspectors talked to many pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes, lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors observed learning in lessons. These observations were made jointly with senior leaders.
- Various documents were evaluated, including: the school's action plan and self-evaluation; minutes of the governing body meetings; and safeguarding information and policies. Information about attendance and behaviour was also analysed. Inspectors checked the school's website and the single central record, which contains information on safeguarding checks on staff and staff recruitment.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views by considering the 147 responses to Parent View.

Inspection team

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