

Inspection of Ninestiles, an Academy

Hartfield Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B27 7QG

Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils at Ninestiles do well socially and academically. The pastoral care and support given to pupils is highly effective. Pupils say they feel safe. If bullying happens, pupils say they have someone they can talk to. They trust them to sort it out.

Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. At social times and between lessons, a small number of pupils can be boisterous. However, leaders are addressing this effectively by increasing the number of staff on duty at these times.

A strength of the school is the number of trips and activities offered to pupils. There are more than 70 clubs. These include sport, music, art, drama and debating. There are trips to the theatre, London and a trip next year is being planned to Indonesia.

All staff have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. For them, this means getting good qualifications as well as preparing them to be good active citizens. For example, pupils learn to respect each other through the 'Aspire' programme, delivered in form time. Pupils value Ninestiles' open and diverse culture. Pupils respect others' differences.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have thought carefully about the subjects pupils study. Pupils follow a wide range of subjects at key stage 3. This prepares them well for the choices they make at key stage 4. A full range of subjects are offered at key stage 4 matched to pupils' interests and ability. While the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate (a specific set of subjects at GCSE level) is low, leaders are taking effective action to address this.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The majority of Year 11 pupils go on to education, employment and training. All pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) went on to appropriate post-16 provision last year.

Improving pupils' literacy and numeracy is given high priority. For example, all subjects designate a specified time in the school day so that pupils can 'drop everything and read'. This scheme to encourage pupils' enjoyment of reading is effective and an increasing number of pupils read for pleasure. A pupil commented, "Oliver Twist" is a brilliant book'.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Schemes of work are well planned. Topics are taught in a logical order. This helps pupils to develop their knowledge and skills well. Teachers are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. For example, in English, more challenging texts have been added to schemes of work. The work in pupils' books shows that they are developing a good understanding of more difficult

concepts, such as those found in 'Animal Farm'.

Pupils achieve well in most subjects. Teachers use assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to plan activities to address these effectively. For example, in Spanish, pupils regularly recap previous learning and rehearse vocabulary. This helps them to remember more.

The school provides good support and care for pupils with SEND. Pupils who access the resource base speak enthusiastically about the help they get. However, they could achieve better. A few staff do not make sure that the planned activities and tasks they use effectively support these pupils' learning effectively.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. The steps taken by leaders to improve behaviour at unstructured times are making a difference. The number of pupils being referred to internal isolation for poor behaviour is falling. The number of repeat fixed-term exclusions is reducing. However, while they are used appropriately, the number of fixed-term exclusions overall is not falling.

Leaders look after their staff. For example, the introduction of a new marking policy has reduced the amount of marking required by teachers. This supports staff's well-being and reduces their workload. Leaders are committed to developing staff's teaching skills and expertise. Staff value this.

The trust supports the school well. Trustees, education directors, the chief executive officer and governors play an active role in the school. For example, the link trustee and chair of the local governing board have attended parents' evenings to find out what parents and carers think about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' welfare seriously. They report concerns, knowing that leaders will take appropriate action. Leaders have extensive experience and knowledge about how to support pupils' welfare. They follow up concerns. Pupils get the help they need. Families get the right help at the right time because of the good links with external agencies.

Staff have regular and appropriate training. They know about the specific risks that pupils face in the local area. Pupils know how to identify and minimise these risks because staff support them well.

Appropriate checks are completed on all adults who work at, or visit, the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school provides effective care and nurture for pupils with SEND. However, a few staff do not deliver activities that meet pupils' needs. Consequently, this group of pupils do not do as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the information provided for staff is used to plan and deliver learning activities that meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Fixed-term exclusions are used appropriately. However, the number is not reducing and too many pupils receive a fixed-term exclusion. Leaders need to ensure that the recently introduced strategies to improve pupils' behaviour are applied consistently. In addition, staff need to make sure that pupils are supported to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136406
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10111096
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,457
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Price
Principal	Alex Hughes
Website	www.ninestiles.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2013

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership. This includes the appointment of the principal in April 2019 (previously the co-principal) and, at the same time, the appointment of a vice principal (previously the other co-principal). In September 2019, a new vice principal was appointed.
- Over the past two years, there have been several new curriculum leaders appointed.
- Towards the end of the last academic year, new pastoral posts, called directors of year, replaced the previous heads of year and heads of house. These directors are supported by non-teaching pastoral leads.
- Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has significantly increased.
- The school has a resource base for SEND. Pupils' primary need is cognition and learning. The base has capacity for 45 pupils. Currently, there are 39 pupils in the base ranging from Year 7 to Year 11. All have an education, health and care plan. Pupils access learning in the base and in mainstream lessons.
- The school currently uses alternative provision for 14 pupils. All attend on a full-time basis. The providers used are South and City College Birmingham, Solihull College and East Birmingham Network Academy.

Information about this inspection

- We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We had some concerns about the quality of education, so the inspection was converted into a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
- We met with the principal and other senior leaders, the senior operations manager, the director of inclusion, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the trust and the chief executive officer.
- The inspection focused deeply on English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages, performing arts and healthy, active lifestyles. We met with curriculum leaders, subject teachers and groups of pupils. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- An inspector visited the SEND resource base, visited lessons and met with pupils.
- An inspector checked the school's single central record and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. We spoke to staff and pupils to find out how pupils are kept safe.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Linda McGill	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Hamilton	Ofsted Inspector
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