

Hodge Hill Girls' School

Bromford Road, Birmingham, B36 8EY

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have very high expectations. They share a determination to provide the very best learning experiences for all the students. Leaders have a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Students make good progress and achieve well, especially in English. The achievement of students for whom the pupil premium provides support is particularly good, and their progress is now in line with other students in the school.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Strong relationships, good planning and the very effective use of teaching assistants help students achieve well in lessons.
- The behaviour of students and their attitudes to learning are outstanding. Students are very polite, well-mannered and helpful towards each other. Older students, in particular, are very supportive towards the younger ones. Students feel extremely safe in school.
- The school goes to great lengths to involve and engage the families of the students in the work of the school and this is having a very positive impact on students' attitudes and progress.
- Governance is strong. Members of the governing body are well informed and knowledgeable about the school. They provide very effective support and challenge and this has contributed significantly to the continued improvement of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is consistently good. In some lessons, work is not sufficiently matched to the students' learning needs.
- Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge for students of highest ability.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, three groups of students including the school council, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students’ work.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses from parents recorded in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the results of the school’s own parents’ questionnaire and one parental telephone call. Inspectors also took account of 66 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

Inspection team

Robert Steed, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robin Fugill	Additional Inspector
Mary Davis	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- There are significantly more students from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is slightly above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that in most other schools.
- A very small number of students attend alternative educational provision at Reflections, James Brindley Medical School and City United.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share existing outstanding practice to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and ensure that all teaching is at least good by:
 - ensuring work is consistently well matched to the learning needs of all students
 - providing more challenge for those students of highest ability.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' basic skills in reading, writing and communication on entry to the school are broadly average for their age, although those in mathematics are below average.
- Over recent years, the proportion of Year 11 students gaining five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, has been rising steadily and is now slightly above the national average. Current predictions, based on school data and the results of early entries in English and mathematics indicate that this rise in attainment will continue in the current year. This was confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of work during the inspection.
- Achievement in English is well above average. The proportion of students making and exceeding expected rates of progress is above the national average. Courses have been recently changed to better suit students' needs and to address falling attainment. The school's predictions for the current year and the results of early entries to the GCSE English examination show that these new courses are having a positive impact on the achievement of students.
- Attainment in mathematics has been below the national average in recent years. This is partly because of some previously ineffective teaching in that subject, and because of initially lower attainment in the subject. School leaders have responded quickly to address this and students' progress in mathematics has accelerated over the past year. Standards are now rising with results comparing favourably with national averages. Teaching in mathematics is now consistently good or outstanding.
- The school enters selected students for their GCSE English and mathematics examinations at the end of Year 10 after carefully considering the needs of individual students. There are higher-level courses for those who are successful in these examinations and their potential is not limited.
- Inspectors observed good and outstanding learning across the school in all subjects. For example, in science, good achievement was demonstrated by all students as they shared their own strongly held views on the disposing of plastics during a lesson on recycling.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support a comprehensive programme of strategies. These include targeted support, impact mentors, Saturday school, mathematics and reading intervention and educational visits. Parents are encouraged to become involved in these interventions which are being successful in raising achievement and developing pupils' self-esteem and attitudes to learning.
- The achievement of students known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is rising at a similar rate to all other students in the school. In 2013, the average GCSE grade of these students was half a grade behind their classmates in English and one grade behind in mathematics. There is now no gap in rates of progress between this group and their classmates. These students are supported well.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because school leaders are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity through carefully targeted support. For example, outstanding teaching was observed by inspectors in some lower set lessons where students' made great progress and their self-confidence was well developed.

- Students from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language all make similarly good progress.
- The very few students who attend off-site provision are very carefully monitored and are making the progress expected of them.
- The school's data show that almost all students leaving the school in 2013 continued in education, training or employment. This demonstrates the school's commitment in preparing students for the next stage of their life.
- The school's strong emphasis on the development of literacy is reinforced by many displays around the school and in classrooms and supports students' good achievement. This support is effective as shown by the high attainment achieved in English. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to provide additional support for literacy and numeracy through extra classes and a 'Book Club' which promotes a love of reading across the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The large majority of teaching is good or better and contributes to the overall good progress made by most students. This was reflected in lessons seen during the inspection.
- In the large majority of lessons where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers have high expectations of what the students can achieve. Teachers plan well and lessons are structured so that students know where they are in their learning and precisely how they can improve. In these lessons, students are given a variety of activities that actively involve them in their learning and provide sufficient challenge for students of all abilities. Consequently, students achieve well and develop confidence in their ability to succeed.
- Students say that they learn best when they are given the opportunity to discuss their learning in more detail and this was a key feature of much of the outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. For example, in a year 10 health and social care lesson, students explored how barriers to communication could be overcome. They worked closely together in groups discussing their ideas before presenting these to the rest of the class, enabling all to make outstanding progress.
- Many teachers are very skilled in their use of questioning to share ideas and extend students' learning further. Literacy and numeracy are well promoted across a wide range of subjects with effective use of key vocabulary, students reading out loud and reference to graphs and proportions observed by inspectors.
- Students have a clear understanding of their targets and how well they are doing. Students routinely check their own and other classmates' work to check for mistakes. As a consequence, students have a clear understanding of how they will be assessed and are able to develop their skills in identifying how to improve further.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs and this contributes significantly to the good progress these students are making at the school.
- There are many examples of good marking of students' written work which supports their learning. In some subjects, students are expected to respond to the advice given in order to learn by their mistakes, but this is not consistent across the school.

- In the small number of less-effective lessons, teachers do not always plan tasks that sufficiently challenge students of all abilities, particularly the most-able learners, who then find the work too easy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students are happy and proud to be members of their school community and this creates an outstandingly positive atmosphere for learning. They behave exceptionally well around the school and are courteous, polite and extremely welcoming to visitors. Students were very keen to tell inspectors how much they enjoyed being at this school.
- An outstanding feature of the school's work is the way in which it promotes the development of responsibility and leadership skills among the older students. Year 11 students wear a different coloured sweatshirt to the rest of the school. This enables them to be more easily identified as they act as mentors in a variety of aspects of school life to younger students, a responsibility they take very seriously.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and students. This creates a very positive climate for learning where students can do well. Low level disruption in lessons is rare because staff manage behaviour consistently and fairly. Mutual warmth and respect between adults and students are very evident.
- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and, in all lessons observed, students showed an enthusiasm for their learning and were keen to do well. Students take a great pride in their achievements, listen attentively to each other and their teachers and work meticulously on their tasks. When teachers provide opportunities for students to take an active part in the lesson, students demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for learning and show high levels of independence.
- Attendance is well above the national average and continues to rise because students enjoy coming to school. Almost all lessons observed by inspectors were fully attended. Students are very punctual to lessons.
- The school council are encouraged to play a significant role in the running of the school by providing a clear 'student voice' on aspects such as reporting on the quality of teaching, appointing new staff and improving facilities. Their opinions and views are taken into account when some decisions are made by the school.
- School assemblies are very effective in supporting students' moral and spiritual development. An inspector observed a very effective assembly as part of anti-bullying week in which complex issues linked to cyber-bullying were clearly explained and explored. Assemblies are also well used to celebrate students' achievements and differences. For example, students told inspectors about a student-led assembly on the theme of 'Why we stand out', about students with disabilities, which was very sympathetically received.
- The responses to Parent View and the school's own questionnaires to parents indicate that a very large majority of parents agree that students behave well, that they are well cared for and they feel safe at school.
- Students feel extremely safe in school. They have a very clear understanding of all forms of

bullying, including cyber-bullying, and on the rare occasions when bullying does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. Pastoral staff provide high quality care and guidance for those who need it.

- Current school data show exclusions are low and falling.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body provide strong and determined leadership and have a clear vision for the school's future. They have demonstrated a strong commitment to raise standards further and have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics which is now having a major impact.
- The headteacher and leadership team are very successful in creating a school community where every student has an equal chance to learn and take part in as many of the opportunities as possible that the school has to offer. Students agree, with one saying that the 'School helps you be determined to succeed'.
- School self-evaluation is detailed and appropriate targets have been identified for improvement. These focus strongly on raising the aspirations and achievement of all groups of students.
- Teaching and learning are managed well. There is a very rigorous system for managing teachers' performance and teachers' pay progression, closely linked to the effectiveness of staff in raising students' achievement. The school's information, gained from the systematic monitoring of teaching and the review of departments, is used successfully. It helps to provide a relevant and well-organised programme of staff training which is tightly focused on raising students' achievement.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and this is a strength of the school. It is shown by the students' willingness to support each other within the school and their eagerness and generosity in supporting a wide range of charities in the local area and wider world beyond the school.
- New information technology systems are in place to accurately track the achievement and progress of students. These systems are now easily accessible to staff who use them effectively to identify underperformance of individual students in their subject areas and to provide them with extra help.
- Middle leaders, such as heads of department and subject leaders, are well supported and held to account by senior leaders and governors for the performance of staff and the achievement of students within the departments. They are well directed in this task by extensive and thorough departmental self-evaluations. Middle leaders are constantly reviewing and developing provision, although some new strategies, for example the 'Book Club' to promote literacy, have not yet had a full impact on raising achievement.
- The courses that students follow throughout the school are flexible and very well matched to their needs and interests. There is a strong emphasis on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills from the time they enter the school. The courses prepare students well for both life outside the school and for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- There is an excellent range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Staff run a variety of clubs including Breakfast Club, sports, art, drama, homework and film clubs (with a 3D cinema),

meditation classes and an internet cafe. There is an increasing range of residential and day trips and visits. These activities promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.

- Highly effective careers advice is provided through a range of in-school and external provision and this, together with close links with local colleges, helps students make informed decisions about their future careers which match their own interests and aspirations.
- The school receives effective 'light touch' support and advice from the local authority in areas such as teaching and learning, careers advice and the training of governors.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements, including checks on the attendance, care and safety of those few students in alternative provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a very accurate appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what needs to be done to improve it further. They are kept well informed of the progress the school is making by the headteacher, particularly through detailed and comprehensive written reports, and have a sound understanding of the quality of teaching and students' achievement at the school. The governing body have ensured that effective performance management procedures are in place and lead appropriately to salary progression. They know clearly how the pupil premium is being spent and are monitoring its effectiveness in closing the achievement gap between different groups of students well. They have a comprehensive knowledge of published data and are skilled in using this to check on the progress of the school and hold staff to account. The governing body are committed to the continued success of the school. They see themselves as 'critical friends' and provide a good balance between support and challenge.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103483
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	427107

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	749
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Siva Yogaiswaran
Headteacher	Eileen Brown
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2008
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