

Coppice Performing Arts School

Ecclestone Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 2QE

Inspection dates

4–5 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching and achievement are not consistently good, particularly for the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- Sometimes teachers do not set work that is at the right level for pupils. Some pupils lose concentration and do not produce enough work.
- Teachers do not ask enough questions that require pupils to think hard.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not achieve as well in academic courses as they do in vocational subjects. Too few achieve the highest grades in academic courses.
- Students who re-take GCSE mathematics in the sixth form do not achieve well enough.
- Leaders do not check the impact of teaching on the progress of different groups of pupils in sufficient detail.
- The strategies to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils are not checked robustly.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently.
- The governing body does not hold school leaders to account well enough for closing the gaps that exist between the progress of different groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Teaching, achievement and leadership are all improving.
- The headteacher is creating a culture where staff and pupils are developing high expectations of themselves.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite and considerate.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 are catching up with others in the school.
- The performing arts subjects are strong.
- Sixth form students make good progress in vocational courses. Students' personal development is good in the sixth form.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and have a strong understanding of safety matters.
- The curriculum is good. It helps pupils to develop a good awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
- Pupils understand and apply the principles of British values.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement in Years 7 to 11 so that they are at least consistently good across the school by:
 - making sure that work is accurately matched to the skills and abilities of pupils, particularly the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability
 - asking probing questions which require pupils to think deeply
 - insisting that pupils concentrate, work hard and complete sufficient work.

- Raise achievement in the sixth form in academic courses by:
 - making sure that work is appropriately challenging, particularly for the most able students so that more achieve the highest grades
 - helping students to develop skills to manage their learning more independently than they do at present.

- Improve outcomes in the sixth form for those students who re-take GCSE mathematics.

- Improve the impact of leaders by:
 - making sure that the checks on teaching take into account the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress, particularly the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability
 - regularly checking the impact of the strategies to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3, particularly those who are the most able pupils
 - ensuring that all staff consistently follow the school's marking policy.

An external review of governance 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

- Although getting better, leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not ensured that pupils consistently benefit from good or better teaching across subjects and year groups. This is the case particularly for the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, not all pupils receive the support that they need to achieve well.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have made sure that the way they check teaching and achievement has improved. For example, they conduct subject reviews at appropriate points throughout the year and these are beginning to improve teaching and pupils' progress.
- However, the impact of this work is not yet resulting in all groups of pupils making consistently strong progress because leaders do not always link their judgements on the quality of teaching with its impact on progress. In particular, these checks have not taken sufficient account of the impact of teaching for the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. This means that precise strategies for improving teaching for these groups of pupils are not always identified in enough detail.
- Leaders are not using the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils as well as they could. They do not regularly review the impact of their strategies, which means that any changes or improvements which may be necessary are not identified quickly. As a result, the impact of the additional funding is not as good in key stage 3 as it is in key stage 4, particularly for those younger disadvantaged pupils who are the most able.
- Leaders have introduced a new marking policy since the last inspection. Where this is used well, it makes a good contribution to helping pupils to improve their work. However, leaders have not made sure that it is used consistently which means that pupils do not routinely benefit from helpful advice and feedback.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have had difficulties recruiting teachers, including subject leaders. This has resulted in the school not making as much progress as it should have. However, the school is now appropriately staffed and effective leadership in English, mathematics and science is beginning to improve teaching and achievement. However, the full impact of this work is yet to be seen because pupils are not yet making consistently strong progress.
- Subject leaders have an accurate understanding of the priorities for further improvement and they have good strategies in place to improve teaching and achievement. However, as with the whole-school approach, subject leaders do not link the quality of teaching to the impact it is having on pupils' progress as well as they should.
- Leaders make sure that teachers benefit from regular training opportunities as well as the weekly meeting that provides teachers with opportunities to share their work. This professional development has had a strong impact on improving behaviour and it is increasingly helping teachers to improve their skills.
- The headteacher has improved systems for setting targets for teachers to help them improve their work. Teachers are held to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in their classes. Regular meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress, where staff are supported to address any underachievement, and these are successfully helping teachers to improve.
- The vibrant curriculum is well planned and it makes a good contribution to pupils' good behaviour. There is an appropriate balance of vocational and GCSE courses. Activities promote literacy and numeracy across different subjects. For example, pupils develop the use of key vocabulary in subjects and apply their skills in mathematics to solve real world problems. However, the curriculum does not have impact on pupils' academic progress because it is not always taught well.
- The school has a strong and proud tradition of excellence in the performing arts. It is a centre for showcasing and developing talent with its dance companies. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in performances, including the annual musical production, which has taken place on occasions at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the school's clear vision and values. This means the school is a calm, orderly environment where pupils from different backgrounds and from different cultures mix happily together. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures through assemblies, for example. Leaders ensure that any form of discrimination is not tolerated and this helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority provides an appropriate level of challenge and support to the school. This is complemented by the effective support the school is receiving from two national leaders of education. This is having a good impact on the quality of teaching in mathematics and in helping leaders to develop

greater clarity about the school's strategic priorities.

- The headteacher is making sure that the school is improving. Along with other senior leaders, she has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is increasingly creating a culture which promotes high expectations for all staff and pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is aware that the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability are not making good progress but it does not hold leaders to account as well as it should for improving this.
 - The governing body monitors the impact of the additional pupil premium funding and governors know that gaps in pupils' achievement are beginning to narrow in key stage 4. However, it does not check the impact of this funding well enough in relation to younger pupils in key stage 3, particularly those who are the most able disadvantaged pupils.
 - The chair of the governing body has worked effectively to ensure that governors have good, complementary skills. He has made sure that the governing body has received comprehensive safeguarding training and governors understand their roles well with respect to this.
 - Governors visit the school at appropriate points throughout the year so that they can see for themselves the strengths and areas requiring improvement. They do this with guidance from teachers and leaders, which is appropriate.
 - The governing body has appropriate procedures in place for setting performance targets for the headteacher. They also have robust procedures for making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises in relation to them achieving their performance.
 - The governing body is keen to ensure that it is continuously improving. As a result, prior to the inspection, governors had planned an external review of their work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe in the school because leaders place an appropriately high emphasis on this. Leaders provide parents with regular newsletters about safety matters. All staff are vetted and trained as required and they know how to recognise any signs that a pupil may be at risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not consistently offer effective challenge for the most able pupils and support for those who have special educational needs or disability.
- Some teachers, across all year groups and most subjects, do not regularly set work for the most able pupils which is sufficiently challenging. As a result, many of these pupils are not always able to reach their high potential because they are often not required to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in sophisticated ways. This is the most important reason why this group of pupils across the school do not consistently make good or better progress.
- Teachers' questions are not regularly well matched to the different skills and abilities of pupils and they often only require short, superficial answers from pupils. This means that pupils are not required to think deeply, particularly those pupils who are the most able.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is too variable and not consistently good. It is better in English than it is in mathematics because work is more often well matched to the pupils' learning needs in this subject. Some of these pupils have levels of attainment which are well below their chronological age. Teachers do not always take this into account and plan work which is sometimes too difficult.
- When work is not accurately matched to pupils' learning needs, some lose concentration and begin to lose focus in parts of lessons. This results in lost learning time and sometimes means that these pupils do not produce enough work.
- Teaching is improving, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Leaders in these areas are working hard to support teachers so that work is better matched to the different abilities of pupils. As a result, assessment is improving because it is more accurate than it has been in the past.
- Many pupils enjoy dance, drama and music lessons because teaching is usually good. Activities often motivate pupils to work hard and achieve their best because teachers make sure that work is interesting and enjoyable.

- Some pupils who need additional support benefit from small group teaching. For example, in mathematics pupils are taught well in these sessions because teachers know exactly what each pupil needs to do to improve. As a result, these pupils are catching up well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. A significant minority of pupils do not work hard enough and others do not regularly complete homework. Some pupils do not complete enough work in lessons or concentrate as well as they should. This is partly because work is not always well matched to pupils' skills and abilities and also because some of these pupils lack confidence in their own ability.
- The combination of work that is not always well matched to pupils' learning needs as well as some pupils lacking in self-belief results in some not valuing learning as much as they should. As a result, these pupils do not routinely demonstrate good attitudes to learning.
- Leaders and teachers are aware that some pupils need support to develop greater self-confidence in their ability. They have taken steps to support pupils, through celebration events, for example. Many teachers are proactive in recognising success in lessons, which is increasingly encouraging pupils to believe in themselves and work hard.
- The school works well with a range of other agencies to make sure that all aspects of the most vulnerable pupils' personal development and welfare receive attention. This includes working with families and children in need of 'early help' to prevent more serious concerns developing. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to talk to at school if they have any concerns relating to personal matters.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that adults in the school can be relied upon to deal with any 'falling outs.' They have a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations, such as fire safety and using the internet safely.
- Bullying is rare at the school. Pupils are aware of how to recognise and guard against the different forms of bullying such as homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils of all ages, including sixth form students, behave respectfully towards each other and their teachers. The vast majority are well-mannered and polite. For example, many pupils politely opened doors for inspectors and others were keen to direct inspectors around the school.
- Pupils dress smartly and they wear their uniform with pride. Most are proud to be members of the school.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and at social times. At break times, pupils from different backgrounds interact with each other sensibly and enjoy each other's company. Movement between lessons is calm and orderly.
- The school is effective in dealing with pupils with behavioural difficulties. Pupils with poor behaviour have been subject to some fixed-term exclusions. Through the school's support and guidance, the behaviour of these pupils has improved markedly and exclusions are reducing.
- Attendance is above average reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and pupils arrive punctually. The work that the school does to promote regular attendance continues to be successful.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision in other institutions behave well and their attendance is good.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils who are currently in the school are not making consistently good progress across year groups and subjects. The progress of the most able pupils is not as good as it should be in all year groups.
- Many of the most able pupils, as well as others, are making the progress that is expected in English, mathematics and science but too few make progress that is better than this. Work which is not always

challenging enough is the key reason why this is the position.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability who are currently in the school do not make consistently good progress, though it is usually better in English than it is in mathematics. Some of these pupils have not always been taught well enough in the past in mathematics and they have a lot of ground to catch up. Pupils completing Year 11 for the past few years who have special educational needs or disability have not made good progress across a range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 are not catching up quickly enough with other pupils nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils currently in key stage 4 are catching up with their classmates and this reflects the work the school does to support these pupils through some small group teaching. Gaps between these pupils and others are narrowing or closing in terms of the proportion of pupils who are making the progress which is expected. However, too few disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who are the most able, are making progress which is better than expected, especially in key stage 3, where there are some wide gaps.
- The school uses the additional Year 7 catch-up premium well (this is additional funding given to schools to support those who join with attainment in English and mathematics below what is expected). Many lower attaining pupils are catching up in both subjects, though this is better in English than it is in mathematics.
- The small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are from minority ethnic heritages are making good progress in many subjects, including English.
- Those pupils who are supported by the additional pupil premium funding and who also have special educational needs or disability in Year 11 English are making good progress. However, progress for these pupils is less strong in Year 10, reflecting the variability which exists.
- In 2015, the proportion of Year 11 pupils who achieved five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, declined from the previous year and it was below average.
- Since the last inspection, too few pupils completing Year 11 have achieved the highest grades. However, the schools' assessment information for pupils who are currently in Year 11 indicates that this is set to improve this year and this is supported by outcomes in the recent 'mock' examinations. These outcomes are also a strong indication that the proportion of pupils who are on track to achieve five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is set to improve.
- Pupils make good progress in the performing arts subjects because teaching is usually good or better.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress because the curriculum engages and interests them.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not make consistently good progress in academic courses and too few achieve the highest grades in these courses.
- Leadership requires improvement because teaching is not always as good as it should be in academic courses. However, leaders are improving the sixth form and they have made sure that outcomes in vocational courses are consistently good. Leaders have some good strategies for checking students' progress and the quality of teaching, though these are not yet having enough impact on students' progress in academic courses.
- Students benefit from a well-planned programme of impartial careers information, advice and guidance, which begins when students are in Year 11 and continues throughout the two years of sixth form study. Leaders have made sure that students are supported very effectively in helping them to study courses that are well matched to their interests and future career aspirations. As a result, retention rates are high and all students move on to higher education or employment with training.
- Teaching requires improvement in academic courses. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for students to take responsibility for managing their own learning in lessons. As a result, many students are highly reliant on teachers structuring activities. This means that students are not developing the skills that they need to become independent learners and it is an important reason why not enough students achieve the top grades in academic subjects.
- Activities in lessons are not always as well matched as they should be to the different skills and abilities of students, particularly those who are the most able. This means that these students are not always working at their high level of ability and, consequently, not reaching the highest grades.

- Teaching in vocational subjects is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the examination requirements and they use this effectively to help students make good progress.
- The school's work to promote personal development and welfare in the sixth form is good. Students feel safe and understand safety matters and they are well supported by their teachers with respect to their personal development.
- The curriculum is well planned and it makes a strong contribution to students' personal development, good behaviour and strong progress in vocational subjects. Students take part in a range of activities, which are additional to their examination courses. For example, students develop their leadership skills through supporting different subject areas in the school for part of the week. Students are rewarded at bronze, silver or gold level for their work in this area.
- Year 12 students are supported in developing their employability skills through the work experience programme, in which all students take part.
- Sixth form students are strong role models for younger pupils and behaviour is always good.
- Outcomes require improvement because students' progress in academic courses is not consistently good and too few students achieve the highest grades in these subjects. This has been the position for the past few years, though there are signs of improvement. Outcomes in vocational subjects are consistently good, including the proportion of students who typically achieve the highest grades.
- Students who are required to re-take GCSE English make good progress and most achieve at least a grade C. However, students are less successful in improving their GCSE mathematics grades.

School details

Unique reference number	104390
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection Number	10002529

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	920
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	115
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	William Brisco
Headteacher	Janice Fletcher
Telephone number	01902 558550
Website	www.coppice.wolverhampton.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@coppice.wolverhampton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22-23 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- Ninety per cent of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The pupil premium, which is additional government funding given to schools for children who are looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for just over one in four. This is similar to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on a full-time basis. These pupils attend the Orchard Centre, the Midpoint Centre, Walsall College and the Braybrook Centre.
- The school is supported by two national leaders in education from The Streetly Academy and South Bromsgrove High School. This support began in September 2015.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school moved to new buildings in 2013. There are a number of on-going financial issues, which partly relate to the costs of the new buildings, which are placing significant demands on the school budget.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 35 lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of pupils. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority and held a meeting with the national leaders in education that support the school.
- Inspectors analysed the 37 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed 51 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire as well as 73 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors also analysed a parental questionnaire which the school uses.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding and the school's development plan. In addition, inspectors analysed a wide range of information on pupils' performance.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Ofsted Inspector

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