

Alperton Community School

Stanley Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 4JE

Inspection dates	14–15 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has led highly effective and sustained improvements in the school's performance since the last inspection. This has resulted in markedly better outcomes for pupils across the school.
- The governing body is exceptionally well informed, highly ambitious and uncompromising in its support and challenge for improving outcomes that further pupils' achievement and personal development.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good or better across year groups and subjects. Teachers use questioning with skill to explore ideas and quickly identify potential underperformance or misconceptions.
- Teachers plan to meet pupils' needs well, effectively using their strong subject knowledge to enthuse pupils and accelerate their learning.
- Outcomes at GCSE have rapidly improved since the last inspection. Pupils make strong progress towards better grades across subjects, including English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are now much better prepared for their subsequent education, training and employment.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their aspirational targets. Pupils with education, health and care plans, including those who attend the on-site resourced unit, are well supported by expert staff.
- Systems for assessment are used consistently well to accelerate pupils' progress. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress towards rapidly improving outcomes at GCSE and in 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Lower-attaining pupils make rapid progress in their literacy and numeracy because of the school's effective catch-up programme.
- The school's 16 to 19 study programmes are well led and managed. Students follow programmes of study that are well suited to their starting points and they receive effective advice and guidance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and engage with topical issues. They celebrate the diversity within the school well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attendance overall is better than the national average. However, it is improving more slowly in key stage 4.
- The most able pupils do not make the same rapid progress as their peers towards the best possible grades across all subjects and year groups.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that the most able pupils make consistently strong progress by teachers planning activities that consistently stretch and challenge their understanding.
- Ensure that pupils' attendance in key stage 4 improves further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Leaders have a thorough and accurate understanding of their school, driving improvements rapidly where they identify need for improvement. Leaders are uncompromising in their ambition for pupils' outcomes and have shaped a culture within the school of high expectation and aspiration which is supported by robust and effective systems.
- The headteacher has been instrumental in bringing about the changes required to ensure rapid and sustained improvements in standards. The headteacher's work has been tireless in pursuit of excellence for his pupils' education and he is rightly recognised by staff and governors for this commitment.
- Leaders have drawn upon effective external support and have invited external reviews of a number of areas including inclusion, staff professional development and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These and other reviews reflect leaders' commitment and success through an ongoing cycle of improvement which has already led to sustained and much stronger outcomes at GCSE and in the sixth form.
- Learning is highly valued by staff and pupils alike. Consequently, pupils are motivated to attend school where they can expect quality lessons across their subjects. Middle leaders are effective in securing consistency within their subjects so that assessment and feedback promote learning and build upon a securely delivered curriculum.
- The school's curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain, developing key skills and knowledge through a broad range of subject-based and extra-curricular options. Leaders' review of the curriculum has aligned key stages 3 and 4 to make the best use of time as pupils work towards GCSE examinations. An ongoing review of the resourced provision is improving the integration into the mainstream of pupils with education, health and care plans.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that teachers' professional development is targeted so that school priorities are achieved while supporting individual ambitions. Pay progression is closely linked to pupils' performance and appraisal helps to identify specific training that teachers, including those new to the profession, value strongly. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and continues to improve.
- The comprehensive programme of activities and timetabled lessons which support pupils' personal development is exceptionally strong. The recently appointed leader of the school's careers, advice and guidance programme is reviewing existing systems to ensure that what pupils experience is also well evaluated to inform subsequent strategies. Consequently, pupils are well prepared to make decisions about their subsequent education, training and employment, particularly in the sixth form.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who join the school with lower than expected levels of numeracy and literacy, make very strong progress and catch up with their peers rapidly. This is as a result of the pupil premium and catch-up premium government funding being well deployed to support intervention programmes and additional lessons to support pupils' English and mathematics development. This has been particularly effective for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good and improving as a result of staff sharing leaders' ambition for pupils' outcomes and pupils aspiring to achieve highly. Where the attendance of some groups of pupils is less strong, leaders have robust support systems in place. Leaders' high expectations of pupils' behaviour have resulted in the overall number of exclusions falling and pupils reported to inspectors that they felt behaviour was markedly improved.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors form an effective and supportive body which has an excellent knowledge of the school and a clear vision for its future developments. Governors have been tireless in their pursuit of improvement, ensuring that leaders, including middle leaders, are able to identify how their actions are improving pupils' outcomes. Leaders are held firmly to account and governors are stringent in their challenge of underperformance.
 - Governors understand the school's place within the community and are passionate about preparing pupils for life in modern Britain by seeking opportunities to develop local and broader links, for example through the school's careers programme. Pupils' development and welfare very much form the core of governors' work.

- The new school building project is being well managed and governors work closely with senior leaders to monitor progress. The school's finances are subject to close and careful scrutiny so that any changes are planned for in advance and the school's resources are effectively deployed.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and governors are well trained in how to identify and respond to welfare issues through the use of well-understood systems and an open culture of support. Their awareness of local and national issues, including the 'Prevent' duty, is excellent. As a result, the school's work to promote pupils' and parents' awareness of issues such as radicalisation, female genital mutilation and e-safety is very strong. The very positive responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys reflect the effectiveness of the school's work to keep children safe. Leaders have ensured that there is appropriate expertise in key administrative areas, such as the checks made on staff who work with children. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school because pupils look out for one another and staff care about them. When leaders identify that external support is required, this is quickly arranged and effectively used.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Quality teaching and learning is at the heart of leaders' planning and has resulted in a very high degree of consistency in teachers' use of the assessment system to support pupils' progress. In the best examples, teachers identify pupils' needs while planning activities that build upon pupils' prior learning and rapidly develop it. This is commonly the case across the school.
- In mathematics and English, leaders have ensured that pupils develop and enhance key skills quickly. Across subjects, pupils' numeracy and literacy are enhanced as a result of the whole-school approach which is the focus of effective professional development sessions. Teachers all treat the teaching of numeracy and literacy as their responsibility, further strengthening progress in these areas.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are most effective where teachers use questioning to explore topics and encourage pupils to reflect upon their understanding. For example, in a French lesson, inspectors observed pupils of all abilities discussing work in the target language, an experience that pupils reported is common and helps them learn vocabulary rapidly. This high level of teacher expectation was observed across most subjects, with pupils' work demonstrating a strong commitment on the part of pupils and teachers to securing good understanding.
- Teachers' use of questioning is particularly effective when teachers seek to tease out pupils' own ideas and opinions, creating the opportunity for pupils to develop their resilience when sharing their thoughts. Pupils are also provided with frequent opportunities to develop their ideas through extended writing, for example in history and geography.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to ask questions when they are uncertain. Inspectors noted that the school's expectation for the use of feedback was met regularly, with pupils given time to consider and reflect upon their successes and mistakes. Feedback for the most able, however, does not consistently encourage pupils to challenge themselves and their understanding.
- Teachers plan work that effectively meets the needs of most pupils. The whole-school focus upon disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and lower-attaining pupils is well supported by professional development strategies in which teachers are consistently well versed. For example, other adults support teachers' work in lessons effectively and teachers are able to identify quickly potential underperformance because of the simplicity of the school's assessment system.
- Systems are in place and well used to ensure that assessment is robust and presents an accurate picture of pupils' performance. Teachers access assessment information regularly and use it to inform their planning and when reporting progress to parents. Leaders systematically and regularly analyse assessment information so that underperformance is swiftly addressed through classroom and extra-curricular interventions.
- Pupils' work is well presented with only a few instances of unkempt work seen by inspectors. This includes homework which is regularly set and monitored by a new school system. Similarly, inspectors observed very few examples of off-task behaviour and these were usually quickly addressed by teachers.
- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is run through tutor time. Work in books for this aspect of the pupils' learning demonstrated a good focus upon developing the skills required for life in modern Britain, although these books did not always demonstrate the same high standards of presentation seen elsewhere.

- Leaders have identified the need to improve further the performance of the most able, implementing a comprehensive programme which is increasingly effective. All staff understand that the most able are a focus group because historically these pupils have not achieved as well as they should. In many subjects, particularly where pupils are set according to ability, the most able pupils are now making accelerated progress. This is not yet the case across all year groups, including the sixth form, because teachers do not consistently set work that is sufficiently challenging.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The comprehensive programme of curricular and extra-curricular activities and events creates ample opportunity for pupils to interact with one another. They develop friendly and effective relationships with people inside and outside of the school community and explore their personal interests.
- Pupils are highly aspirational as a result of staff refusing to accept anything short of positive attitudes towards learning and lofty targets. Inspectors observed a number of occasions where pupils worked collaboratively, pushing each other on and identifying how they could work together in order to achieve a better outcome.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy through the PSHE programme and have opportunities to shape their school through the student leadership team. Pupils feel as if they have a say in the way their school runs. For example, pupils worked on improving the menu in the school's canteen to provide healthier options.
- The school's work on inclusion is very strong and it has been recognised as a centre of excellence by Inclusion Quality Mark. The school's provision for pupils with education, health and care plans who join in Year 10 is a notable example of the school's effective work to ensure that all groups of pupils overcome potential barriers. Pupils are well prepared to be confident and independent members of the community.
- Staff are committed to pupils' welfare and development. This is evident in the work staff do to ensure pupils succeed and is reflected in pupils' feedback to inspectors and in the high degree of respect that pupils and staff show one another. The school sites are largely litter-free and well maintained, with pupils' work adorning the walls alongside posters that reinforce school systems and expectations.
- The advice and guidance provided to pupils comes in many forms, including external speakers, extended learning days with careers and work-related themes, and regular one-to-one meetings with tutors and advisers. Because of this, pupils are able to make informed decisions so that they move on to education, training or employment options that are right for them. This provision is currently under review in order to enhance the way pupils receive advice and guidance as they move through key stages 3 and 4.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils demonstrate a high degree of respect and tolerance towards one another and towards staff, creating an environment that sixth-form students referred to happily as a 'community school not just in name'.
- Pupils play and interact with each other well during break and lunchtime. They are prompt to return to lessons, reflecting good punctuality overall. Pupils told inspectors that the diversity within the school is an asset and that everybody tends to 'just get along'.
- Instances of bullying are rare. Occasions where behaviour falls short of leaders' expectations are logged and thoroughly followed up and, as a result, behaviour overall continues to improve. Students in the sixth form reflect upon this shift as a significant change since the last inspection due to raised expectations being almost universally adopted.
- Leaders have reviewed the use of internal exclusion so that the focus is aligned to improving pupils' learning. Likewise, in the few cases where alternative provision is used by the school, this is with a focus on improving behaviour so that pupils can reintegrate into school smoothly. Intervention schemes such as boxing and police cadets are helping pupils susceptible to poor behaviour to recognise the gains to be made through persevering with the good results they can achieve.
- Pupils' positive attitudes extend to the way that attendance has improved and continues to improve across the school. While stronger in key stage 3, in key stage 4 systems are in place and are working to bring about further improvement. Work with link workers and the local authority is effectively addressing issues that cause persistent absence.

- Overall exclusions are reducing, with fewer fixed-term and internal exclusions resulting from instances of poor behaviour. Leaders have a zero-tolerance approach and clear expectations of behaviour that have resulted in a rise in permanent exclusions this year, but this is against the overall trend of improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From low starting points pupils make rapid progress towards stronger outcomes. In English and mathematics a larger than average proportion of pupils make the progress expected of them and more pupils than average now achieve at least five GCSEs, including English and mathematics, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection.
- Progress across year groups is strong, partly underpinned by the school's assessment system where leaders expect pupils to make more progress than is typically the case in secondary schools. Rapid interventions follow where leaders identify concerns in a pupil's performance, and this system is consistently applied to all. The school's current assessment information indicates that the upward trend in outcomes is being sustained.
- Pupils who join the school with lower than expected abilities in literacy and numeracy make quick progress because of the work teachers and other adults do to support them to catch up with their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do particularly well when they join the school, a trend mirrored in strong GCSE outcomes for this group. Lower-attaining pupils overall are making the best progress of any group currently.
- Disadvantaged pupils make increasingly strong progress because teachers identify and support them through lesson-based and extra-curricular interventions. Variations in the performance of disadvantaged pupils are reducing quickly and are improving year on year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and are well supported by a team who know them well and work tirelessly to ensure they make progress towards targets that are defined when pupils' needs are being identified. Pupils with education, health and care plans are similarly well supported.
- The school's two libraries are well stocked and often used. The libraries are a centre of learning at each site, allowing pupils to read for fun and as part of planned programmes. Pupils' reading habits are monitored so that their reading develops well.
- Leaders' work to support pupils to access appropriate and ambitious courses of study is reflected in the work done to improve the GCSE curriculum offer. A far greater proportion of pupils are now entered for subjects that lead to the English Baccalaureate, placing pupils in a better position to access the courses they have chosen post-16. However, this year the GCSE results will reflect a low English Baccalaureate success rate because this cohort was able to choose GCSEs that do not count towards this qualification.
- Work in pupils' books reflects good outcomes overall. Inspectors noted that there was significant consistency in the way books were maintained, including strategies for assessment that pupils knew and could explain. Where pupils' work demonstrated slower progress, this was where the most able pupils were not being set challenging enough work in some subjects. This is reflected in the school's assessment information where the most able pupils' progress is less rapid than their peers.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Students follow study programmes that they enjoy and are well suited to their abilities. Close monitoring and effective advice allow leaders to provide good support for students' decision-making, both when they apply to join the sixth form and when they are considering their subsequent education, training and employment.
- Leaders of the sixth form have a clear and accurate understanding of this area of the school. They share students' ambition and 'no-limits' attitude and support these with highly effective systems, including careers advice and guidance.
- Most students stay on in the sixth form and complete their programmes of study in Year 13. This reflects the effectiveness of the guidance that students receive and also the effective teaching and learning that is supporting students to make strong progress. From relatively low starting points, progress in 16 to 19 study programmes is strong and sustained.

- Across most subjects, students are continuing to make strong progress according to current information, and this is reflected in students' work. Those subjects where progress is weaker are supported by leaders to help students make up the ground.
- Few students currently choose to follow work-related programmes of study, although this is a growing provision. The curriculum is designed so that it is accessible to all and particularly those students who move into the sixth form from the school's resourced unit and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students experience a range of effective extra-curricular learning opportunities, including work experience, to support their personal development.
- Students' personal development, behaviour and welfare are very strong in the sixth form. Students are proud of their school, most having moved into the sixth form from the main school. Students are supported in their development through a programme that helps them explore themes such as student finance, personal well-being and British values.
- Most students go on to apply to university and are successful in their applications. Students who need to retake GCSE English or mathematics are increasingly achieving at least the grade that they need in order to move on in their development.
- While the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in 16 to 19 study programmes is good, there remains work to do to ensure that the most able students make progress towards the best outcomes across all subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	138610
Local authority	Brent
Inspection Number	10011941

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,362
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mona Shah
Headteacher	Gerard McKenna
Telephone number	0208 902 2038
Website	www.alperton.brent.sch.uk
Email address	office@alperton.brent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average mixed 11 to 18 comprehensive secondary school. The school converted to become an academy in 2012.
- The school is currently split across two sites, with Years 7 to 9 located on Ealing Road and Years 10 to 13 on Stanley Avenue. A new building project is currently under way at the Ealing Road site and will mean that by January 2018 the whole school will be located on one site.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils and children. looked after
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. More than 60% of pupils are from Asian or Asian British Indian and Black or Black British African minority ethnic groups.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; however, a larger proportion have education, health and care plans.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provision supplied by the Jubilee Academy.
- Ten pupils per year join the school's John Boyle Inclusion Centre in Year 10 from Woodfield School.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 45 lessons, many accompanied by senior leaders. These observations of learning were held on both sites and included visiting three catch-up literacy and numeracy sessions. Inspectors observed a staff professional development session and an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, including the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and teachers. Informal conversations were held with staff throughout the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to pupils formally and informally and held a meeting with governors. Telephone conversations were held between an inspector and the school's two improvement partners.
- Inspectors considered the views of 44 parents via the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. The survey responses of 103 staff and 48 pupils were also evaluated.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and development planning; reports of external reviews of aspects of the school; policy and procedures, including those for safeguarding and including the single central register of checks made on staff; assessment information and work in pupils' books; attendance and exclusions information and information regarding alternative provision used by the school.

Inspection team

Matt Tiplin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dennis Canty	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Johanna Davey	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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