

Inspection of Gospel Oak School

Bilston Road, Gospel Oak, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 0BZ

Inspection dates:	30 September and 1 October 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

When Gospel Oak School was inspected in October 2022, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school was inspected on three occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders were judged to have made progress to improve the school, but more work was necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The executive principal of this school is Stephen Brownlow. This school is part of the Central Region Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Guy Shears, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Orla MacSherry.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff agree that Gospel Oak School is a school that is transformed. Pupils behave well. It is a calm place, where pupils feel safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm. Pupils' attendance is strong. Pupils welcome the changes to their school. They are proud that they have been a part of that change by meeting the school's expectations, developing positive attitudes and treating each other with respect.

The school has high expectations for pupils and is ambitious for their future. However, recent cohorts have not achieved as well as they should because the impact of teaching is not yet consistent. There are some occasions where teachers do not use information about what pupils know and can do effectively. This means that, sometimes, the work that pupils do does not lead to them making secure progress through the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the range of activities in the wider curriculum. Increasingly, this means that they feel a deeper sense of belonging to the school. Students in the sixth form enjoy a studious environment that gets the best out of them. They appreciate being involved in the wider life of the school while gaining more independence as learners.

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

The Trust, school leaders and staff have worked hard, together, so that pupils' experience of Gospel Oak School is much better than in the past. Pupils share in detail how much better the school is now. Pupils have especially noticed that they now have a consistent set of teachers, who know them increasingly well.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. It has made sure the curriculum is designed to build pupils' knowledge well, over time. Teachers are aware of the ambitious end points in the curriculum. However, in key stage 4, recent published outcomes are weak. This is because of a legacy of disruption in staffing and poor pupil behaviour. Now that pupils' behaviour is positive and the school has the staff it needs, pupils are achieving much more. However, sometimes, teachers do not use what they know about pupils' progress to adapt teaching to pupils' needs. Sometimes, they do not check pupils' understanding before moving on to new content.

The school has improved how well it identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have this information and use general strategies to meet these pupils' needs. However, sometimes they do not take the action needed to meet pupils' more specific learning needs.

In the sixth form, teachers present information clearly, promoting students' understanding of the course content. Teachers design and use activities to help students remember the content they have been taught. This means that students in the sixth form, including those with SEND, achieve well.

The school has identified that there are pupils who need to improve their reading skills. They have recently started a programme of phonics teaching for those who need it.

Reading is gaining a higher profile. Pupils are beginning to read more widely and often. Those who have fallen behind are beginning to catch up.

The school offers an impressive range of well-considered enrichment activities. Leaders make sure that these are as accessible as possible. They also seek pupils' views on the sorts of things they would like to do in school. This means that enrichment activities are inclusive and well attended, including by pupils with SEND.

The school's programme for personal development helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and understand more about society and culture. For example, the school's 'Culture Day' helped pupils learn about tolerance and respect. Pupils enjoy personal development lessons and value the relevance of the curriculum because the school adapts it to respond to recent global, national and local occurrences.

The school has reviewed its approach to careers education, information advice and guidance. The curriculum takes specific account of the context of the area. Pupils are exposed to an increasing number of work-related experiences, and have personalised careers advice. As a result, pupils who recently left the school went on to the destinations of their choice. Students in the sixth form are well prepared for future success. They receive unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality and locally relevant careers guidance and opportunities for good-quality, meaningful encounters with the world of work.

Those responsible for governance have a detailed knowledge of all aspects of the school. They have the skills and experience to be able to work with executive trust leaders and school leaders to make sure that the school improves swiftly. They make sure that any barriers to the school's improvement are rapidly addressed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not consistently adapt their teaching to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. When this happens, pupils do not build their knowledge over time effectively. The school should ensure that all teachers are sufficiently skilled to adapt their teaching so that pupils' achievement improves.
- Sometimes, teachers do not meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. This means that these pupils do not learn as much as they might. The school should make sure that all teachers have the skills they need to meet the specific needs of individual pupils with SEND.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	135599
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10419960
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	97
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Orla MacSherry
CEO of the trust	Guy Shears
Executive Principal	Stephen Brownlow
Website	gospeloakschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 July 2025, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gospel Oak School is a part of the Central Region Schools Trust.
- School governance is by the board of trustees, an accelerated improvement board and local governing board.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the trust board and local governing board, the chief executive officer and the trust school improvement leader. They also met with the executive principal and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors evaluated the quality of education across different subjects. They held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also visited lessons in the sixth form.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- Staff and pupils' views were considered through Ofsted's surveys. The views of parents and carers were considered through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Clarkson	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Washbourne	His Majesty's Inspector
Bianka Zemke	His Majesty's Inspector
Eve Morris	His Majesty's Inspector

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