

Allerton Grange School

Talbot Avenue, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS17 6SF

Inspection dates 18-19 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress and learn well. From their low starting points, most students make good progress. Students, including those in the sixth form, achieve well in their examinations.
- There has been a significant yearly rise in the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A* to C including mathematics and English since the last inspection. All students, including the deaf and hearing-impaired make equally good progress.
- Good teaching and learning ensure that students make good progress over time. Teachers have high expectations of learning and good subject knowledge. This ensures students acquire new skills quickly, try hard and focus on learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for those with additional needs.
- Students' behaviour and safety are good; they have good attitudes to learning. Students' attendance is above average.
- The effective management of staff performance has ensured that most teaching is now good or better and standards are continuing to rise. Behaviour is managed more consistently, moving from satisfactory, at the last inspection, to good.
- Governors hold the school to account for its work through their effective monitoring of the school's performance. Governors and leaders under the clear direction of the headteacher have ensured that there is good capacity for further improvement.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well in their examination courses with increasing success at A level as a result of good teaching and good leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few students do not achieve as well as they could in the higher grades at GCSE, particularly in English and mathematics.
- In a few lessons, expectations for learning are not always high enough, and there are inconsistencies in target-setting and marking.
- Middle leaders do not always monitor the promotion of literacy and numeracy and students progress in these areas, within their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors met three groups of students and meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders and two members of the governing body. Telephone discussions took place with the Chair of governors, the local authority adviser and an independent consultant who works with the school. Inspectors also took account of 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school’s survey of parents and carers and of the very few letters and telephone calls from parents and carers received.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school development plan, performance management records, safeguarding policies, minutes of meetings of the governing body, whole-school data on students’ progress over time and records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Johan Mackinnon	Additional inspector
Peter Mather	Additional inspector
Peter McKay	Additional inspector
Colin Scott	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most secondary schools. The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs, supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for students' attainment and progress.
- The school hosts specialist provision for hearing-impaired students. The school has specialist status for arts and continues to hold the Artsmark Gold award.
- Since the last inspection, new off-site provision, known as Visionz, has been developed to cater for a few pupils who find it difficult to cope with school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further, especially in English and mathematics by ensuring:
 - that teachers always set high expectations for learning and set challenging targets for students to achieve
 - consistency in the quality of feedback in lessons and in marking so that students always know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - middle leaders closely monitor the promotion of literacy and numeracy and students' progress in these skills within their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards by the end of Year 11 have risen steadily in recent years. Students' attainment in five A* to C grades at GCSE is now significantly above average and the gap between students' performance in achieving five A* to C grades including English and mathematics in their GCSE examinations and schools nationally has narrowed significantly since the last inspection. Previously, attainment was well below average and is now almost in line with the national average. Students' progress in mathematics is now above the national average and progress in English is improving towards the national average.
- The school's accurate data demonstrate good progress for all groups of students at Key Stages 3 and 4, given their starting points. At Key Stage 3, students are making consistently good progress in literacy and numeracy through the 'learning to learn' programme. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups. Students who are supported through the pupil premium make consistently good progress because they receive good support for their learning by skilful staff. Staff make very good use of assessment to match learning tasks to individual needs, providing effective strategies to ensure their good progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. Students read widely as a result of the successful drive in teaching students how to learn at Key Stage 3 through the 'learning to learn' programme. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make equally good progress because teaching assistants break down learning tasks into smaller achievable steps and carefully explain the meaning of technical vocabulary.
- Deaf and hearing-impaired students make good progress because instructors, support staff and teachers of the deaf use voice, signing, visual images and practical work consistently well both in lessons and in the resource base so that all students develop understanding and the accurate use of written English. In a Year 9 science lesson, deaf and hearing-impaired students made the same progress as hearing students in their investigations of air resistance. The teacher selected a well-thought-out practical activity of designing making and testing balloon rockets which all students could access. A teacher of the deaf signed simultaneously as the science teacher explained the learning objective and during practical work, staff supported throughout with signing, articulation, and practical demonstration, constantly checking that students could form their hypotheses and then test it out. Consequently, they had as full and equal access to learning as their peers.
- Students enter the sixth form with lower prior attainment than is usually the case nationally. They make good progress from these lower starting points in their AS courses as a result of good teaching. Some students enter the sixth form to complete a one year course before moving on to further education or employment. However, the majority progress to A-level courses where they achieve good results relative to their starting points.
- The small number of students who learn at the Visionz off-site centre make good progress as they re-engage with learning and achieve success in their vocational courses.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved significantly from the last inspection when it was judged as satisfactory. It is now good because leaders have used the outcomes of rigorous monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning to identify clear strengths and to tackle any

weaknesses. Most lessons are good or better, with a minority requiring improvement. Teachers have good relationships with students, they have good knowledge of their own subjects and lessons proceed at a lively pace. However, occasionally, the skills of literacy and numeracy are not always promoted well enough in lessons, through, for example the setting of written homework tasks.

- Where teaching is good: there are high expectations for learning; there is a range of varied activities to capture students' imaginations; the skills of reading, writing and numeracy are promoted well; appropriate homework is set; and assessment is used effectively to set challenging targets and to inform students on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. As a result, students focus on learning and are keen to complete their tasks. However, where teaching requires improvement, one or more of these strengths are missing. Dynamic, enthusiastic and lively teaching together with excellent subject knowledge and consistently effective use of assessment in well-planned lessons are the key strengths of outstanding teaching seen, in a range of subjects such as history, ethics, physical education, science, ICT and citizenship.
- In a good music lesson, students listened to the songs of Bob Marley before composing their own reggae songs and performing these to their peers. Students were encouraged to use a range of instruments in their compositions and the teacher constantly checked how well they were doing, demonstrating the use of different instruments and textures to improve their compositions, which they performed with pride. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through opportunities to listen to, appreciate and use reggae music in their compositions. Literacy and numeracy were promoted well through the setting of written homework tasks and the use of syncopation and counting beats.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for students with additional needs, those eligible for the pupil premium, and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching for deaf and hearing-impaired students, disabled students and those with special educational needs is good because their learning needs are identified quickly through initial assessments and education plans put into place with clear challenging targets set for learning. Teachers and support staff make good use of this information to match strategies and learning resources to individual needs and break tasks down into smaller achievable steps which deepens understanding.
- Teaching in most lessons in the sixth form is good or better. In the good or better lessons, teachers are effective in developing students' independence in learning. In those requiring improvement, students are much more teacher dependent.

■ **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students are proud of their school, they behave well and they have positive attitudes to learning. Disruption in lessons is rare and is managed well by teachers. When such incidents occur, students respond well to good management of their behaviour. Exclusions are rare with no permanent exclusions in the last three years. Behaviour over time has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was satisfactory.
- Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Students develop good relationships with others and are usually polite and courteous to staff and visitors. Students have a good understanding of the various types of prejudice-based bullying, for example, relating to weight, sexual orientation and race. In discussion one student said, 'We do not

care about other people's appearance or race, it is their personality which counts!' They said that when bullying occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

- Students are acutely aware of how to stay safe and adopt safe practices, for example in the use of their mobile phones and the internet. They play team games safely. They abide by the rules, handle practical equipment safely and move safely along corridors between lessons.
- Attendance has also improved significantly from broadly average to above average. These improvements are the result of good leadership which has developed strong partnership working with the local police and an Asian Women's Group to support a reduction in absence. Most students are punctual to lessons, although a small minority are not.
- The majority of parents and carers who completed on-line questionnaires in Parent View agree that behaviour and safety are good and that on the rare occasions when bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide outstanding leadership in driving the school forward by continually improving the quality of teaching, developing the curriculum and the use of assessment. All leaders, including middle leaders, work together effectively as a team to drive improvements forward. However, middle leaders insufficiently monitor how well students' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted within their subjects. Despite this, the school has improved all aspects of its work and demonstrates good capacity to improve.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers set high aspirations for their students, through effective management of performance which is closely linked to salary progression. All teachers are observed in lessons, with targets set to improve the quality of teaching. These reflect the whole-school priorities for development and are also based on the performance management targets of the headteacher set by governors, and the performance management of the senior leadership team. This, together with good improvement planning, accurate self-evaluation and good training and support for staff, has effectively eliminated weak teaching and led to a steady rise in attainment across the school.
- Staff are realistic about the challenges which face many students in learning and have developed a good curriculum to ensure students achieve their potential. The innovative 'learning to learn' curriculum for students at Key Stage 3 has already encouraged their greater enthusiasm for learning and improved their literacy and numeracy skills. Equally, there is a range of well-conceived vocational courses for students who struggle with more academic learning and an alternative education programme at Visionz for the few who are disengaged with learning, which enables them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, particularly through religious education, personal, social and health education and assemblies. Sixth form students work as mentors promoting responsibility. Leaders have ensured that teachers provide good opportunities for students to work together in pairs and small groups as well as increasing opportunities for individual learning, thus developing social skills effectively. Displays of students' work show the promotion of strong moral values and developing cultural links. The positive school climate based on including all students in the life of the school, respect for others and appreciation of diversity fosters a strong sense of

community among students.

- Leaders ensure good support for students with additional learning needs such as deaf and hearing-impaired students, those who speak English as an additional language and those receiving the pupil premium, enabling them to make equally good progress as their peers. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and is tackled very effectively, through initiatives such as training of mainstream staff in British Sign Language and promoting 'sign of the week' for all students. This fosters a greater understanding and appreciation of the needs of deaf students.
- Students pursue well-chosen courses in the sixth form enabling them to succeed and leave for further or higher education training or employment, as a result of good leadership.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and that leaders effectively meet all safeguarding requirements.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development through their focused visits. They have had their own independent training in understanding performance data, which has been effective in enabling them to hold leaders rigorously to account for students' achievements. They robustly challenge the school's work, particularly the quality of teaching and have ensured that the school manages its funding well.

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	108058
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405149

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	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1440
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Morris
Headteacher	Rick Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2011
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