

William Allitt School

Sunnyside, Newhall, Swadlincote, DE11 0TL

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching and learning is not always sufficiently well planned to match the needs of different groups of learners.
- The teaching of literacy, numeracy and communication skills across all subjects is inconsistent.
- The quality of marking to help students improve their work is variable.
- The school development plan has insufficiently specific and precise actions to help leaders and governors to measure success.
- Too few students make good progress and some groups, particularly those that receive additional funding to meet their specific needs, make less progress than expected.
- Intervention is not always sharply enough focussed by leaders on identified groups in order to close gaps in achievement.
- School governors do not record the ways in which they challenge the school and hold it to account.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a harmonious community that supports students' academic and personal development well. Consequently, students are happy, feel safe and behave well.
- The attainment of pupils has improved, and the progress that most students make is now at expected levels.
- The headteacher and senior team provide a clear vision and sense of direction for the school.
- Leaders and managers are taking decisive action to improve the quality of teaching, which is increasingly good.
- Leaders and managers have sharpened the tracking of student progress.
- Leaders are committed to the training and development of all staff; subject leaders are increasingly effective in checking and improving teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 39 lessons in total. They also watched an assembly and visited many different areas of the school and the site during lessons and at break times.
- Meetings were held with three different groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior staff, subject leaders and an adviser from the local authority.
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including school development plans and policies, lesson and departmental plans, records of lesson monitoring and checks on students' work, and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body.
- The 36 responses made to Parent View were considered, along with an analysis of the school's own parental questionnaire. Staff questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

David Martin, Lead inspector

Brigid Quest-Ritson

Lynn Cox

Michael John Miller

Her Majesty's Inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- William Allitt is a broadly average-sized secondary school with slightly more girls than boys. It is a specialist arts college with an additional specialism in science.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is broadly average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups, or those who speak English as an additional language, is lower than found nationally.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is a little lower than average.
- The school is an Enhanced Resource School, currently for nine students with physical disability. These students are taught, with appropriate support, within mainstream school classes.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to at least good and, consequently, the progress made by students overall by:
 - ensuring that the proportion of students making more than expected progress at least matches that found in most schools by July 2014
 - ensuring that all lessons are planned taking students' previous learning into account so that their different needs are catered for more effectively by Easter 2013
 - embedding the recently introduced policy for literacy and numeracy, with leaders and managers checking that it is being applied consistently across all subjects and in all classrooms by January 2014
 - Checking that the best practice in marking, giving students clear help in improving their work, is shared and used in all subjects and classrooms by September 2013.
- Check that additional funding provided for some particular groups of students is used to provide intervention that markedly improves their rates of progress, towards that of all other students in the school, by July 2014.
- Improve the leadership and governance of the school by:
 - ensuring that revised action plans have clear, specific and detailed actions that can be regularly checked by school leaders and members of the governing body
 - ensuring that members of the governing body are well informed about the school and that the minutes of their meetings record the ways in which they hold leaders to account
 - Undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 improved considerably in 2011 so that students achieved results at least as good as, and in some measures above national averages. This improvement has been broadly sustained in 2012.
- The proportion of students in Year 11 who made expected levels of progress was similar to that seen in most schools. The proportion of students making better than expected progress was lower than average.
- Indications from the school's own assessment of progress in other year groups indicates that progress could be set to rise further, but there was no evidence provided that shows that substantially more students will make better than expected progress.
- During the inspection, progress was good in the majority of lessons seen. However, the lack of challenge for some more able students in some classes indicates that the progress to higher levels could be better.
- Students with special educational needs now make progress in line with expectations from their starting points. This group made weaker progress by Year 11 in 2011, so there are clear signs of improvement.
- Disabled students, particularly those who have support through Enhanced Resource Support provision, make progress in line with their peers. They are well supported to be able to take a full part in main school lessons, whenever possible.
- Students, for whom pupil premium funding provides support, including those eligible for free school meals, make significantly less progress than other students. School tracking shows that this gap in performance is not closing quickly enough at present.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school judges that teaching has improved considerably in the last year. During the inspection the large majority of teaching seen was good. There was some outstanding practice and no teaching was inadequate.
- Over time, however, teaching has not been strong enough to ensure good progress, particularly for students who have special educational needs or for those whom the pupil premium provides support. Intervention is not always sharply focused on their needs.
- In the best lessons seen, the aims of the lesson were quickly established and students were rapidly engaged in active, interesting activities. By the end of such lessons clear gains were made in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- In an outstanding drama lesson as part of the 'opening minds' curriculum, the teacher's skilful questioning, coupled with clear, shared assessment criteria, enabled pupils to make rapid progress in understanding and applying the 'freeze-frame' technique.

- In weaker lessons, planning is not always sufficiently well adjusted to meet the needs of different groups of learners. Although different outcomes are planned, there is not always a clear strategy used to ensure that all students are sufficiently challenged.
- Although there is frequent sharing of learning aims and checking of the understanding of levels that students are working at, teachers are not typically using assessment of progress during lessons to adjust their teaching to meet students' different needs.
- In some lessons, as a consequence, pace slows and learning is more passive. There is a lack of variety of tasks in some lessons with the result that students' interest is sometimes lost or learning is not maximised.
- The 'opening minds' in Year 7 is successful at developing students' wider skills. The teaching of literacy and numeracy, beyond English and mathematics, is weaker. Although good in some classrooms, there is little consistent evidence of the recent school policy in practice.
- At this early stage of the year there was relatively little work in books. Although books are marked regularly, the marking seen did not always give clear advice or help on how students could improve their work. Nonetheless, there is good practice in the school that can be built upon.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and safe practices in the school are a major strength. This is the result of sustained, high-quality care and a positive atmosphere of mutual respect between students, and students and adults.
- The behaviour seen in lessons was always good, and often exemplary. Around the building students are unfailingly polite, helpful and considerate. On occasions, where teaching is less effective, students could be a little passive in lessons.
- Pupils are kept safe and they feel safe. They willingly take responsibility to look after themselves and each other; for example, they behave with great patience and tolerance in the many areas of the school where the design of corridors make for congestion.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve. School staff works hard to encourage attendance and engage quickly and effectively with parents when persistent absence is noted, or where students are most at risk.
- The students report that bullying is rare; they are made aware of different forms of bullying though personal, social and health education and know how they should react if they see any bullying. They are confident that the school deals quickly with any reported incidents.
- A number of students study for some of the week outside the school. The progress they make and their attendance are regularly monitored and checked. All students gain recognised qualifications through attendance at such courses.
- Many students willingly take on additional responsibilities, such as the prefects and the eco-

council. The proportion of students participating in additional activities outside the normal day is high in the specialist subjects, sports and community activities.

- Parental responses, both from Parent View and school questionnaires, show that parents are overwhelmingly confident that their children are happy and safe at school. Staff turnover is very low as staffs are proud to work with the young people who attend.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is providing a renewed drive and energy that is building on the existing strengths of the school, including the specialist subjects, by creating fresh impetus in terms of a strong focus on teaching and learning and students' progress.
- A great deal of work has gone into the tracking of students' progress with quicker interventions where required. This has been increasingly adopted by subject leaders and all staff and has made a significant impact on overall results in the last two years.
- This improved tracking is not yet having as much impact on those students who should be making better than average progress. Neither is it closing gaps in performance quickly enough for some groups, particularly those students supported by pupil premium funding.
- The leadership of teaching and learning has recently been strengthened at senior management and subject leader level. Staff training and support following lesson observations have significantly improved much of the practice in classrooms.
- The performance management arrangements for staff have been reviewed and improved. Staff targets are clearly focused on the quality of teaching and the progress made by students from their different starting points.
- Subject leaders and others with responsibility for key aspects of the school's work are increasingly taking responsibility for developing, planning, checking and evaluating the progress that is being made in improving students' achievement.
- School development planning is based on a small number of appropriate targets, and the school has identified clear criteria for success. However, the actions identified are insufficiently specific and detailed and cannot easily be monitored and evaluated.
- The local authority has provided a reasonable level of support to the school. This has been most effective in terms of support for lesson observations, which has had an impact on the quality of teaching. Support for governance is less evident.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is at a point of considerable change of membership, but remains highly supportive of the school and of the headteacher's drive for change
 - could be better informed about some aspects of the school's work, although this appears stronger in some committees than at full governing body meetings
 - shows little evidence, through minutes of meetings, of providing challenge to school leaders, although there is some challenge acknowledged by school staff
 - Would benefit from external support at this time, to ensure that new governors are able to fulfil their duties effectively.

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	112938
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401326

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	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1000
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Mead
Headteacher	David Clark
Date of previous school inspection	19-20 May 2010
Telephone number	01283 216404
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