

# Bicester Community College

Queen's Avenue, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 2NS

**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders, managers and the governing body have not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of students since the previous inspection.
- GCSE results are declining and achievement in the sixth form has fallen.
- Students do not make enough progress from their different starting points, including in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that students achieve well. Teachers do not use information about students' progress well enough to plan lessons which meet the individual needs of students. Too often, students are not given clear advice about how to improve their work.
- The sixth form is inadequate because achievement in different subjects varies too much and too many students do not successfully complete their courses.
- The partnership with parents and carers is not strong enough and too many parents and carers have concerns about the school which they feel have not been addressed.
- Students usually do what they are asked but where teaching is not good they do not take an active enough part in lessons. The poor behaviour of a few students in some lessons slows the pace of learning further.
- Attendance is too low and too many students do not come to school regularly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students are polite and welcoming to visitors, and behaviour around the school is generally sensible. Students report that they feel safe in school.
- Recently appointed leaders with particular responsibilities understand how to improve the school and are beginning to take decisive steps forward.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 37 lessons of which seven were joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff including senior and middle leaders, students and representatives of the governing body. They also held two telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 133 respondents who had completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection.
- Inspectors also took account of the views of 78 staff who returned inspection questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Ann Short , Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kathy Maddox

Additional inspector

Rashida Sharif

Additional inspector

Gordon Jackson

Additional inspector

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The number of students on roll has fallen since the last inspection, including the number in the sixth form.
- There has been a high turnover of staff with 22 new members of the teaching staff joining the school in September 2012.
- Most students are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below average.
- The proportion of students with disabilities and special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good in order to raise achievement by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students are capable of achieving
  - ensuring that teachers use information about students' progress to plan lessons which meet the needs of all students
  - making sure that work in lessons stretches, enthuses and absorbs students
  - making sure teachers use questioning more effectively in lessons to check students' understanding and so adapt lessons accordingly
  - providing students with clear, regular and helpful feedback so that they understand how to improve their work
  - ensuring that behaviour in classrooms is managed consistently well by all teachers and that school procedures are followed in full.
- Ensure all leaders drive improvements at a rapid pace by:
  - making careful checks on the progress being made by all students in all year groups, especially of the impact of teaching on learning and achievement, and take effective action when this is not good enough
  - making sure that teachers are held to account for the learning and progress of students in their classes
  - developing a systematic approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
  - making sure that systems for making regular checks on the work of the school are clearly

linked to robust action plans where success can be clearly measured

- making regular checks on attendance and taking swift action when necessary to improve it
- improving the links with parents and carers so they have greater confidence in the quality of the education that the school is providing
- conducting an external review of the effectiveness of governance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because standards achieved at the end of Year 11 are below the national average and have fallen for the last two years.
- In too many lessons, students do not make fast enough progress. Students enter the school with average attainment but they make too little progress by the end of Year 11, including in English and in mathematics. The proportion making the expected progress in English and in mathematics is well below the national average.
- Achievement in the sixth form fell in 2012 and was inadequate. Achievement across different subjects varies too much. Too many students did not pass examinations at AS level and did not continue to the next year of their course so that the numbers in Year 13 have dropped significantly. Some sixth-form students made good progress from their starting points in some subjects, for example in media studies, physical education and religious studies.
- Students who have disabilities and special educational needs do not achieve as well as they should because teachers do not plan well enough to help them to learn. Students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make particularly poor progress and are not catching up with their peers. The gap in the average point score (APS) between this group of students and their peers widened in 2012.
- There are now better systems in place to check on students' progress and information from assessments is collected at fixed points throughout the year. Students are given targets and action is now taken when any fall behind, especially in Year 11. However, students' understanding of the levels at which they are working and their targets is too variable and they do not always understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work.
- The progress made by the current Year 10 and 11 is better than in recent years and these students are attaining at higher levels. However, progress across all year groups of students and subjects is not analysed carefully enough to identify how well different groups of students are achieving.
- Some students are entered early for GCSE in English and mathematics but only when they are judged to be ready. If they do not achieve their expected grades, they are given another opportunity to take the examinations.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate over time and too much teaching is not effective enough to help students to make the progress they should. This is also true in the sixth form. Some lesson planning is weak. In too many lessons, teachers' expectations are too low and they do not use information about students' previous achievements to plan lessons which are well matched to the students' different needs and abilities. This was an issue identified at the previous inspection.
- Where teaching is weak, too many students are passive because they are not challenged or enthused by the tasks set or clear about what they need to do to achieve well. In some lessons, a few students interrupt the learning of others, which slows progress further.
- The quality and frequency of marking varies too much. Although a few examples of good marking were seen, too often, students are not given clear advice about how to improve their work.
- Some teachers check students' progress during lessons and adapt their teaching when necessary to ensure all students understand the work in hand. However, other teachers do not make these checks and do not use questioning well to assess what students have learnt.
- Homework is not set regularly and there are too few checks made on how homework contributes to students' learning and progress.
- In lessons where teaching is more effective, teachers use a variety of activities to motivate students so that they are able to work well in lessons and make better progress as a result.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate**

- Students, parents and staff all express concerns about behaviour in lessons. School records indicate that, although disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour has reduced since September, it is still too frequent. In some lessons, a small number of students disrupt the learning of others, especially when teaching is weak and lacks challenge. Teachers do not always follow the school's procedures for managing behaviour.
- Students enjoy working together in groups and pairs when they are given opportunities to do so. When invited to discuss issues, they do so with enthusiasm.
- Some parents express concerns about bullying and feel that the school does not do enough to stop this. Students have some understanding about different kinds of bullying and most students spoken to said that the school does take action if incidents are reported.
- Most students report feeling safe in school and staff agree that the students are safe. Students mostly behave well around the school and are polite and friendly to visitors. Good relationships between staff and students were observed during the inspection.
- Attendance has been low for the last two years and there have been too many students who miss time at school. Attendance has improved since September because of new approaches which have been put in place. Most students arrive at school on time but some are late to lessons because they take too long moving from one part of the school to another.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has been higher than average with more than the average proportion of students with special educational needs or who are supported by the pupil premium being excluded. Since September, new systems for managing poor behaviour have been introduced which have resulted in fewer exclusions.

**The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership and management are inadequate because senior leaders and the governing body have not made the necessary improvements to achievement and teaching since the previous inspection. A number of initiatives have been put in place, but only in the last few weeks, and it is too soon to judge whether they will bring about the required improvements. The responses in staff questionnaires show mixed views about the way in which changes are being made.
- The management of staff performance has not been effective in improving teaching and promoting students' progress. Decisions about which staff should get a pay rise have not been based on targets that are linked well enough to students' progress. Teachers are not held to account properly for the learning and progress of students in their classes. Systems have been improved this year but there are still weaknesses in the rigour of the targets set for staff and the ways in which they can be measured.
- Systems for making regular and accurate checks on the work of the school are not effective enough. They are not linked clearly to robust action plans that show precisely how success towards meeting targets will be measured.
- Recent changes to the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have given a clearer direction to plans for improvement and have begun to bring about more effective working. For example, with new leadership of teaching and learning in the last few weeks, staff have said that they now feel better supported.
- Faculty and house leadership has been strengthened by new appointments and these leaders are taking action to improve the school. Students speak very positively about the benefits of the new vertical tutoring and house system which has been in place since September.
- The curriculum is generally matched to the individual needs of the students with suitable vocational options available at Key Stage 4. Students can take part in clubs and after-school activities, and they especially enjoy the good variety of sporting activities. A wide range of subjects is on offer in the sixth form at AS and A level. However, there is no systematic approach to the teaching of literacy or

numeracy across the curriculum, which inhibits the development of these skills in other contexts.

- The school does not tolerate discrimination and has a commitment to equality of opportunity. However, this is not realised in practice because too many students are underachieving and the gap has widened in the achievements of students with disabilities and those entitled to the pupil premium when compared with all pupils nationally.
- The local authority has arranged some support for the school since the previous inspection but it has not been effective enough because improved ways of doing things have not become firmly embedded in school's ways of working. Local authority representatives and school leaders have been working closely together over the last few weeks to plan urgent improvements.
- Although parents and carers are given information through regular newsletters and via the school website, communication has not been effective, which has contributed to negative perceptions of the school. A new parent partnership has been set up to try to improve communication but had not yet met at the time of the inspection.
- There are good examples of the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, in a Year 8 drama lesson, students worked enthusiastically together to create scenes in a story of a missing teenage girl and carefully considered the issues about those living in disadvantaged circumstances. In a Year 13 religious studies lesson, students vigorously debated the moral issues involved in making decisions about abortion. There is no systematic planning, however, for the development of these areas across the school.
- The school meets statutory requirements for safeguarding students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have some knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They visit the school and examine information about the performance of the students but they have not provided rigorous challenge to the school leaders or asked urgent and searching questions about students' achievement or the quality of teaching in the school. Governors are involved in training to make them more effective and recent restructuring means that they are now better able to hold leaders to account but it is too soon to see any impact of these changes. Governors have not monitored the use of pupil premium and other funding to raise achievement. They do not have a clear understanding of how performance management of teachers has been linked to pay increases and to promotion.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123233
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406150

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	963
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Dyson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jason Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20–21 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01869 243331
<b>Fax number</b>	01869 246396
<b>Email address</b>	office.4030@bicester-cc.ocnmail.net

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