

# Belper School and Sixth Form Centre

John O'Gaunts Way, Off Kilburn Road, Belper, DE56 0DA

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Students' achievement, including students in the sixth form is not good enough.
- The sixth form requires improvement.
- Teachers' do not always insist that students try their best. Some adults do not question students well enough to assess their understanding.
- Feedback to students does not always help them to improve their work. They do not always have the opportunity to work independently.
- Students' communication skills are not developed well enough to make the faster progress they need to in order to obtain the highest grades.
- Teachers do not always use assessments to plan work to meet the needs of all abilities.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that all teachers and some leaders are fully trained in the use of new systems to check students' progress.
- A few parents are not satisfied with the ways they have to communicate with the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- The students, including those in the sixth form, are a credit to the school. They are very polite and courteous, and they are keen to learn.
- Students behave well and with respect towards one another, teachers and other adults, in lessons and around the school.
- Leaders use the school's additional funding well. Extra lessons in English and mathematics mean the students it supports are making similar progress to other students.
- Provision for students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.
- The new system for tracking student progress is securing better rates of progress.
- Leaders have introduced a range of strategies to bring improvement to teaching and students' achievement. These are beginning to have an impact.
- Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable and ask leaders challenging questions about the school's performance.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 46 lessons, including in the sixth form, and made shorter visits to other lessons. Twelve lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' workbooks and talked to students about the progress they made in lessons. They also met some students away from lessons to discuss their opinions of the school.
- Inspectors analysed how senior leaders evaluate teaching and learning and looked at the school's records of the checks made on the quality of teaching.
- The views of 102 parents were analysed from their responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Some parents also wrote or spoke directly with inspectors. Inspectors also took account of the views of staff in 59 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Leaders at all levels were interviewed and discussions were held with a representative of the local authority and governance was scrutinised.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, tracking documentation of students' progress in all the areas of learning, performance management documentation and minutes from meetings held by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Bennett	Additional Inspector
Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Additional Inspector
Peter Bailey	Additional Inspector
Joan McPhail	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a specialist technology college where 280 students are in the sixth form.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school. Most students come from White British backgrounds, with other students from a range of different heritages.
- The proportion of students who are supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and from service families) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also smaller than the national average.
- The school provides alternative provision on-site and off-site. The on-site Access provision is a centre for focused one-to-one support for students with short-term needs. Off-site provision includes individual programmes or short courses at Derby College. Other provision includes Acorn and Nacro.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum requirements set for students' attainment and progress.
- The sixth form takes its students mostly from the school's own GCSE classes. There is a very small intake from other schools.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase rates of progress by:
  - using assessments to plan work at the right level of difficulty for all abilities
  - ensuring teachers aim higher for what all students can achieve
  - providing more opportunities for students to find things out for themselves
  - making sure that there are more opportunities for students to think deeply about what they need to say when they are discussing each others' work
  - making certain that teachers question students skilfully in order to check their level of understanding and adapt the work if necessary to secure rapid rates of learning
  - ensuring that students know what they need to do to improve their work and are asked to respond to this feedback.
- Improve the leadership of the school by:
  - training all teachers and leaders in the analysis of students' progress so they can regularly check how well they are doing
  - ensuring teachers use the analysis to adapt work for those students who are falling behind or to provide harder work for some students to reach even higher levels
  - developing better ways of communicating with parents.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The number of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics has fluctuated over the last three years. Overall attainment is broadly in line with the national average. Progress is too slow and achievement requires improvement given the students average starting points.
- In 2011 and 2012 the proportion of students making the progress that was expected in English and mathematics declined. These results were affected considerably by the under-performance of some boys and students in receipt of additional funding.
- The school has acted swiftly to ensure that these two groups catch up with other groups of learners. Leaders now have an effective system for tracking student progress. They are able to identify underperformance and intervene promptly. These students now have extra lessons. Their progress since September 2012 has improved.
- The school's accurate student progress information shows that current rates of progress for all groups of learners are now consistently better. Most students are making the expected rates of progress in all subjects in all key stages.
- In 2012 there was a slight decline in the proportion of students achieving the higher grades. Once more the most affected groups were boys and those receiving additional funding, students on free school meals and those in care.
- The progress of students with special educational needs and those in receipt of additional funding is similar to that of all other students and is improving. Their learning needs are identified at an early stage and support and resources are targeted well. Adults regularly review the success of intervention strategies. Activities are well-planned and provide real life experiences for the students. For example, students in a Year 7 nurture group are beginning to make more rapid progress in reading and writing and developing interviewing skills through planning and holding mock interviews.
- Sixth form students' results are broadly average at GCE examinations and equivalent. Students performed less well in applied subjects. A three-year trend from 2010 shows inconsistent patterns of achievement in GCE qualifications. These patterns were due to a lack of rigorous checking to ensure that all students were making progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because in some lessons, teachers do not expect enough of students and literacy skills are not taught effectively so that students can attain higher levels in their work. This means that students do not make sufficiently good progress.
- Although good teaching and sometimes outstanding teaching was observed, this is not consistent across the school and is not securing consistently good or better progress for all students.
- Some teachers use effective questioning skills to assess students' level of understanding. In these lessons work is adapted to sustain the students' interest and maintain good levels of

progress. However, this practice is not used across the school and in all subject areas.

- Verbal feedback to students is often unclear and written feedback in workbooks is inconsistent. Students do not always follow up on teachers' written feedback because they are not always required to do so.
- There is not a clear school-wide policy on how to teach communication skills. Students who display a good understanding of what they are learning are not always able to explain clearly and logically what they are doing and why. This affects the quality of their written work, which is often limited by clarity of thought. For example, when they need to explain the difference between the use of the written language used by Shakespeare and how the same ideas might be written today, as a Year 11 class was trying to do when observed.
- In the best teaching, planning included work for students of different abilities and the activities were managed well. There were some independent investigations undertaken by the students, as in an information and communication technology lesson in Year 11 and also in a Year 11 catering lesson. Students benefited from independent research because it gave them a lot of 'accidental learning' as one Year 11 catering student said, because 'I learned a lot about Italy when I started researching how to prepare and cook a risotto dish.'
- Teaching in extra lessons to raise the achievement of students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs are well targeted and are mostly good. Some students also benefit from well-planned and well-monitored alternative off-site and on-site provisions. For example the Access centre on school site creates a safe environment and is used effectively to prevent fixed-term and permanent exclusions for students who encounter temporary difficulties with either attending school or some lessons or with their work. There are very good working relationships with Derby College which has inspired students to want to learn again.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement. There are features of good teaching in some lessons, for example some effective question and answer techniques, high expectations by teachers who set students quite demanding tasks. For example one Year 13 class had to explore and explain the foreign policies of different countries during the Second World War, in collaborative groups involving critical peer reviews. However, there is not enough independent work, pair or group discussions.

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

- Behaviour and safety are positive features of this school. There is a philosophy of mutual respect. The behaviour policy is comprehensive with rewards and sanctions that are understood well by students and used effectively by all staff.
- Students are polite and courteous. Their attitude to learning is consistently positive, Even when the work offers limited challenge to them and does not stimulate them. They concentrate on their work even when the activities are not very interesting.
- The current attendance rate indicates an improving trend and is now broadly average. There has been improvement in the monitoring of attendance and better cooperation with parents about unauthorised absences. Students arrive at school more punctually and gather around the school site in quiet social groups.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and effectively addressed. Students have a very good understanding of all kinds of bullying and how to report them if they witness any incidents.

- Students feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. There is effective support for those students in need of extra help in managing their behaviour in cooperation with other agencies. This has a positive impact on students' attendance and their attitudes to learning.
- Sixth-form students are very well-behaved. They enjoy coming to the school. Some parents have indicated, some concerns on how the school deals with behaviour, but nine out of 10 parents say that their children feel safe at school.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because the quality of teaching and students' achievement has not been consistently fast enough for all groups of learners across the school.
- School leaders have a clear vision for improvement, which is shared by governors and staff. They have been putting in place appropriate measures and systems to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement. However, these are not yet fully understood by everyone or embedded in the daily work of the school. Some leaders are not fully familiar with the computerised data tracking and are, therefore, not using it to its full advantage.
- The self-evaluation by leaders is accurate, but not rigorous enough. For instance, the school was unable to fully explain the small decline in attainment in 2012. The school improvement plan, endorsed by the governing body, reflects accurately the actions identified in the self-evaluation to bring about higher standards.
- Leaders have put in place rigorous systems for dealing with the management of teachers' performance. This includes regular lesson observations and targets for improving teaching, linked to students' progress and achievement. Decisions about teachers' salaries are based on whether the targets have been achieved.
- The school uses the money it receives through the pupil premium suitably to support students entitled to this funding. Strategies include extra lessons in English and mathematics, free examinations retakes, half of the cost to purchase the progress tracking system already mentioned, the employment of three learning mentors, free travel passes, the creation of a 'safe' meeting room for confidential meetings and governor training. Impact is evident already in the progress of these students since September 2012
- All statutory steps are taken to safeguard students. Measures for child protection are fully established. The child protection officer works with outside agencies to provide welfare support when needed. All staff are appropriately trained.
- The school provides many good opportunities for student to develop their social skills, both in the daily curriculum and as part of out of school activities. Many take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and the youth engagement scheme with the Derbyshire Fire Service. Students have a fully developed understanding of peoples' beliefs in Great Britain and abroad as well as a keen appreciation for drama through performance in school and visits to the theatre. A strong sense of moral right and wrong is imparted through assemblies, for example on the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Most of the parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) are happy with the education their students receive. However, a small minority expressed concerns about the rate of progress the students make and would like to receive information more

regularly about this.

- The local authority has worked well with the school since September 2011 to drive forward improvements in teaching. It has developed partnerships between schools, recommended the computerised data system, and assisted senior leaders in how to use it. It was involved in the recruitment of the new headteacher.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. The current governing body holds the headteacher to account by setting targets for his performance. They monitor regularly the headteacher's progress towards these targets. Governors know that the school requires improvement. They are fully aware of how achievement altered in 2012 after a track record of steady progress for students before then. They want the best education for the students in the school and have been working closely with the school management team in monitoring teachers' performance. They contributed to decision making about how the pupil premium should be spent. Governors know how money is allocated. They know all the intervention programmes the school has put in place to increase the progress of students in receipt of additional funding and they are keeping a close eye on how these students are making progress in English and maths. The chair of the finance committee works closely with the school's accountant to ensure value for money.

## 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>	112989
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401332
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<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>	1464
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Eccleston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Trevor Harding
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	04 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 825281
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