

Chancellor's School

Pine Grove, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, AL9 7BN

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

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

- There has been insufficient time for the new leadership team to achieve enough improvements in the quality of teaching or the progress of the students.
- Not enough students gain the higher grades in some GCSE and A-level subjects to demonstrate good progress.
- Students are not set sufficiently challenging targets in some subjects that lead to consistently good progress and high standards.
- Effective support is not always provided for students who are at risk of underachieving.
- Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is not yet fully effective in ensuring their good progress.
- There is too much teaching that still requires improvement. There are inconsistencies in teachers' marking, their use of questioning and their encouragement of independent learning.
- Performance targets for teachers are not consistently based on achieving good student progress or addressing specific areas of weakness in teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team is making important changes that are improving the school.
- Students make good progress in mathematics, design and technology, foreign languages and the performing arts. Standards in these subjects are well above average.
- There have been considerable improvements in the behaviour and attendance of students. As a result, behaviour is good and rates of attendance are above average.
- Governors have taken strong action to address previous shortcomings in the leadership of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 48 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, senior leaders, staff and groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 179 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and the 55 responses from the staff questionnaire distributed for the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of evidence, including the school self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, the system to track students' progress, and records relating to behaviour and attendance. They also looked at records of lesson observations by senior staff, performance management information, safeguarding documentation, and a sample of students' work.

Inspection team

Stephen Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

June Cannie

Additional Inspector

Rebecca Hawkins

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is average-sized with a sixth form.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. There is a small number from various minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, students from armed services families and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, or at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has specialisms in mathematics, computing and languages.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students take alternative provision at off-site courses.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2012.
- There has been a recent formation of a new senior leadership team and a restructuring of the subject areas into faculties.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is good or better by ensuring that all teachers are:
 - encouraging students to take more responsibility for their own learning
 - improving the use of questioning to check understanding and challenge the students in their thinking
 - using marking to show students how to improve their work
 - involving students in the assessment of their work.
- Improve the attainment and progress of students across the school, so that standards in all subjects are well above average by:
 - ensuring that, in all subjects, staff and students are working towards challenging targets which demonstrate good or better progress
 - using the systems for tracking students' progress more effectively so that all teachers can provide additional support for all students at risk of underachieving, including those students eligible for the pupil premium
 - developing effective strategies to ensure the better progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management so that it has more impact on school improvement by:
 - embedding the roles of the senior leadership team and faculty leaders so that they are consistently effective in the improvement of the school
 - ensuring that inadequate teaching is eliminated and that the amount of teaching which requires improvement is significantly reduced
 - making sure that support is provided in subject areas where the progress of students could be better
 - ensuring that teachers' performance targets are consistently based on students' making good or better progress, and also address specific weaknesses in teaching

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment is not high enough in all subjects to demonstrate good progress overall. Students start at the school with above-average standards but not enough students reach the higher grades at GCSE or A level in all subjects. Although there has been an improvement over the last year, attainment in too many subjects remains in line with the national average. Although the majority of students are making the progress they should, teaching is too variable so that too few are making better progress than this.
 - The percentage of students who gain five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics is above average but the proportion of students making good progress from their high starting points is below that found nationally. More students are capable of gaining higher grades in art, business studies, physical education and science. A growing number of students made good progress in English last year, but there was underachievement in a couple of classes due to staff absences.
 - Students in the sixth form make progress that is broadly in line with their capabilities, but progress is variable and too few gain their full potential in their AS and A2 examinations. Although most students progress on to employment, training and higher education, too few students gain the higher grades in their examinations. However, predictions for the current year suggest that more students are on line to attain A* to B grades than in previous years.
 - The newly introduced systems for tracking students' progress, and the support provided for underachieving students, are leading to improved progress for many students. However, underachieving students are not identified quickly enough by some teachers and some do not get fully effective additional support or guidance.
 - Students are given attainment targets in all subjects but these are not always sufficiently demanding to demonstrate good or better progress. Not all teachers are fully challenging their students in addressing their areas of weakness so that they can gain the higher grades. Many students are capable of gaining higher grades in their examinations.
 - A number of disabled students and those who have special educational needs have not made enough progress in the past. New systems are now in place to support these students so that they can overcome barriers to learning. Progress during the present year is adequate, due to more effective work from other adults, although support in lessons is not always fully effective to support these students.
 - Progress in mathematics is good in Key Stage 4. The school's policy is to enter students early in GCSE mathematics has been effective and allows them to spend more time on other subjects or continue to study mathematics at a higher level if they gain their target grade. Progress is also good in design and technology, performing arts and modern foreign languages. Most students gain the higher grades at GCSE in these subjects. The small numbers of Key Stage 4 students who now take work-related courses off-site benefit from the practical approach to learning and make reasonable progress.
 - The school is using additional funding to narrow the gap between the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium and the other students. However, the attainment and progress of
-

students known to be eligible for free school meals is still below that of the other students. The school is now tracking the progress of these students more carefully. Money is allocated for teaching assistants to provide extra support in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Too much teaching across the school requires improvement and a small but significant amount of teaching is inadequate. Although there is evidence of good or even outstanding teaching, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching across the school. There are too many lessons where students make less progress than they should.
- Not enough teachers are encouraging their students to work independently and take greater responsibility for their own learning. This was a key area for improvement in the previous inspection so that students are better prepared for higher education, training or the world of work. In some lessons, students sit listening for too long without being actively involved or encouraged to think about the topic.
- Some teachers are not using questioning to engage students in their learning or to check their understanding. Too many teachers are missing the opportunity to use questioning to challenge the students and extend their thinking.
- Some teachers do not mark work regularly enough and do not always show students how to improve their work so that they can gain the higher grades. Too few teachers are encouraging students to take part in the assessment of their own work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are benefiting from the extra support they receive in and out of classes. However, not all teachers are acknowledging their learning needs or making the necessary adjustments to their planning to help them in lessons.
- In lessons where students made good or better progress, teachers are skilful in developing activities which fully engage the students and allow them to take some responsibility for their own learning. For example, Year 9 students made good progress when they worked in pairs to assess their film reviews and then reported back to the class on how they were going to improve their assignment. Similarly, Year 13 students made rapid progress in chemistry as the teacher skilfully used questioning to allow the students to apply and extend their knowledge to examination questions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most students behave well and this contributes to a positive environment for learning. Parents, carers and students confirm that behaviour has improved over the last year since the appointment of the new headteacher. There are now clear expectations of behaviour and consistent systems to deal with any misbehaviour.
- Attendance is above average and this reflects students' enjoyment of school. There has been a marked improvement in attendance and a reduction in persistent absence. Parents and carers also comment on the improvement in uniform and how students are demonstrating a greater pride in their school. The regular assemblies foster commitment and provide opportunities for celebrating success.

- Students are generally polite and courteous to staff and each other. They appreciate the new opportunities to take a fuller part in the school through the revamped house system and school council. Sixth formers act as good role models and have opportunities to support the younger students and act as prefects. Many students are involved in fundraising and out-of-school activities, particularly in sports and the performing arts.
- Incidents of bullying are extremely rare. The few cases recorded involved name-calling, and were dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are aware of the different forms of possible bullying, such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability.
- Students generally respond well to teachers' supportive approach to promote high standards of behaviour. However, a small number of students lose attention in a few lessons, particularly in the lower sets when the work does not fully engage them. Students are developing their skills in managing their own behaviour and can be trusted to move around the corridors and socialise at break and lunchtime with only moderate supervision.
- Students say they feel safe in the school and display a good understanding of issues relating to safety. They are aware of how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as using the internet and social networking sites. Students mentioned that the personal and social education lessons provide them with information on sex education and the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher is providing strong leadership which is driving considerable improvements in the school over the short period of time he has been in post, but there has been insufficient time for the new leadership to have enough impact on improving students' progress and the quality of teaching. Although there are clear signs that this is becoming a better school, there is still work to do in accelerating the progress of students and improving the overall quality of teaching. However, there are already significant improvements in the behaviour, uniform and attendance of students.
 - The senior leadership team and faculty leaders are establishing more robust systems for monitoring the quality of teaching in order to raise standards across the subject areas. This new structure of leadership has only been in place for a term, so it is yet to have a full impact on improvements in the school.
 - The headteacher challenges underperformance and has made some changes to staffing to address this issue. He is addressing inadequate teaching but the quality of teaching is still not consistently good or better across the school. Similarly, the support for underperforming departments has not yet been fully effective in raising the rate of progress of students in these subjects.
 - The new system of performance management ensures that teachers are more accountable for the progress of their students and all salary progression is now linked to student progress and the quality of teaching. Leaders are undertaking regular lesson observations to monitor teaching and identify areas for improvement. However, teachers' performance targets do not consistently refer to the percentage of students making good or better progress, or the specific weaknesses in teaching which need to be addressed.
-

- The organisation of subjects provides a broad range of experiences for the students and allows them to select an adequate range of courses in Key Stages 4 and 5. There are a number of vocational options at GCSE and A level which support greater student engagement. A range of outside visits and out-of-school activities increase students' enjoyment and experience of school. The range of experiences contributes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The local authority has been active in supporting the governors to address previous weaknesses in the leadership in the school. They have provided considerable help to the school prior to the appointment of the present headteacher.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has taken strong and appropriate action to address previous shortcomings in the leadership of the school. It is now well informed about the school's progress and areas for development, although this was not the case in the past. Governors are now fully involved in monitoring progress and in holding leaders and staff to account. The headteacher ensures that governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching and about students' achievement in relation to other similar schools. This allows them to make confident decisions on salary progression, although they had insufficient information to do this in the past. They are now working closely with the headteacher to tackle the remaining inadequate teaching in the school. They ensure that the school's procedures for safeguarding are robust and meet statutory requirements. Governors now oversee and challenge the use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that it is more effectively spent to support eligible students. Governors are regularly undertaking professional training so that they can monitor school improvements more 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	117591
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	401676

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1066
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Holm
Headteacher	David Croston
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
Telephone number	01707 650702
Fax number	01707 663204
Email address	admin@chancellors.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

