

Buxton Community School

College Road, Buxton, SK17 9EA

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 achieve well. They make good progress and standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are above average. Achievement in English is particularly good.
- Teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice. Teachers have high expectations of students and develop good working relationships in the classroom.
- Students feel safe. They behave well and work very well together.
- The school values each individual and offers a wide range of subjects and activities that appeal to all students' interests and ambitions.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress on their AS and A-level courses. They are given good-quality advice, support and guidance which help them to make well-informed decisions about future employment, education and training.
- Senior leaders and governors are working successfully to drive improvements in teaching and learning, and standards are rising.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes students' progress slows because they are not always given enough opportunities to learn without the help of the teacher.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to respond to teachers' written and verbal comments and so they do not make as much progress as they could.
- The best practice in teaching is not fully shared across the school, with the result that the progress students make in different lessons varies.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 41 lessons taught by 40 teachers. Six of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the school’s leadership team. Inspectors also carried out a series of shorter visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, a representative of the local authority, and two members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 86 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to questionnaires completed by 102 staff were also analysed and considered
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national published assessment data and the school’s own data, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, behaviour policies and records and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

Matthew Spours, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Keith Brown	Additional Inspector
Philip Drabble	Additional Inspector
Jillian Fury	Additional Inspector
Charlotte Evers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Buxton Community School is larger than the average-sized school.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional support for looked-after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- No students are taught in alternative provision away from the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strengths of teaching, so that more is outstanding, by:
 - broadening the range of strategies to promote students' active and independent learning
 - ensuring that more opportunities are provided for students to have a dialogue with teachers about how to improve their work and are given time to act upon comments made in teachers' marking
 - sharing the best practice more widely across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is broadly average. They make good progress, and results at GCSE have been above national averages since the previous inspection.
- Standards in GCSE English and several other subjects, such as geography and history, are particularly strong. Reading and writing are promoted well across the school including through the use of materials which support both children and their parents in developing reading and spelling skills together. The school also uses a wide range of teaching activities to ensure high standards of punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Last year, there was a dip in GCSE mathematics and science results but the school has put in place a variety of engaging and challenging classroom activities, and supported students with extra well-focused lessons, to ensure that they are on track to make improved progress in these subjects. Carefully selected students have been entered early for GCSE mathematics and have achieved well. Early entry has also raised these students' self-esteem and their belief that they can succeed.
- Year 7 students eligible for additional support in reading from the government's catch-up premium are being well supported through targeted provision, including one-to-one tuition. As a result, they are making good progress in improving their reading skills.
- Students supported by pupil premium funding at the school are making better progress because the money is spent effectively on extra staffing, educational resources and carefully targeted support. Consequently, the one GCSE grade gap in English and mathematics between these students and their classmates in 2012 is now closing quickly.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other students because staff have identified students' individual needs early and arranged the right additional help. Teachers and teaching assistants support students well, providing challenge and encouragement and helping them with subject-specific vocabulary.
- From their different starting points, students make good progress in the school's sixth form. Results at AS, A level and in BTEC and other vocational qualifications enable the majority of students to go on to their first choice further education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is rarely less than good and, at times, it is outstanding. Lesson observations, the school's robust monitoring data and scrutiny of students' work show that teaching is improving. Teaching enables students to achieve well over time.
- There is some outstanding practice in a wide range of subjects but this not being shared widely enough across the school to raise the overall quality of teaching still further.
- Most teaching has good pace and involves varied tasks. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and develop a climate for learning which makes lessons enjoyable. A Year 12 student said, 'Teachers are really helpful and I've enjoyed our lessons.' On a few occasions, however, teachers do not include opportunities for students to learn actively and independently, and so the pace of learning slows.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make regular use of well-focused lesson objectives. Teachers and other adults in classrooms support students well so that the majority make good progress. Work is carefully modified for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Positive and supportive relationships between staff and students are well established so that most students develop into confident learners. In a high-quality Year 9 physical education lesson, for example, students progressed exceptionally well in both developing their skills of striking and catching, and explaining why and how the techniques were important in the context of a game of rounders.
- Teachers generally mark and assess students' work regularly. However, occasionally, teachers do not give constructive feedback and discuss ideas for improvement with students and provide them with further opportunities to improve their work.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and the use of assessment provides teachers with a clear picture of students' progress and helps teachers to plan appropriate activities. Class sizes are generally small, which ensures that all students have opportunities to work closely with their teachers to achieve their best.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of students enjoy learning and work hard. Behaviour is good. The large majority of parents and carers agree that their children are safe and happy in school and are positive about behaviour in the school.
- The school is calm and orderly. Most students enjoy coming to school and feel that there have been improvements in the way students behave.
- The system of rewards and sanctions is well understood by all students and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. The school's 'inter-form-challenge' and 'golden ticket' awards, linked to the merit system, have been particularly effective in encouraging students to focus on their studies and to behave well.
- The school is successfully using strong links with parents to improve attendance rates over time and has reduced the number of permanent exclusions. Attendance is now average and exclusion rates are below average.
- Students say that they feel very safe in school. The school makes sure that students are well aware of different types of bullying and they do not feel that bullying is an issue at the school.
- The school has a structured programme of activities in tutor time, personal, social and health education and assemblies, during which students are taught how to keep themselves safe. Most recently, pupils took part in a Crime and Safety Awareness Day with a crime prevention charity. This reinforced their understanding of social responsibilities and staying safe in the community.
- Sixth form students receive well-targeted information, support and guidance. They contribute well to the life of the school; for example, on the sixth form committee, as sports leaders, or as mentors to younger students.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher knows her school well and has brought about improvements since the last inspection. School improvement planning is rigorous and linked to effective action planning and subject to accurate and regular checks by governors and senior leaders.
- Arrangements for the management of teachers' performance are well organised. There are effective links between pay and progression through the salary levels. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their students.
- There is a commitment to training and professional development for teachers and this is linked to the school's quality assurance systems and improvement planning. Teachers are given a high degree of personal responsibility to develop their own practice. The school is now in a strong position to spread the best practice in teaching more widely across departments.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced and meets students' needs at GCSE, AS and A level. There are also a number of work-related options available, which encourage greater student engagement.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Recently, for example, 10 students were selected to work at the London 2012 Paralympic Games as volunteers in the athletics arena.
- The school has procedures and practice that make sure staff and students are safe. The levels of care and support for all students are key strengths of the school's practice. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority provides a light-touch level of support to this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is rigorously holding the school to account and has a good understanding of students' attainment and progress. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. Governors make sure that legal requirements are fully met, including for ensuring students' safeguarding. They make regular visits to the school, monitor the school's work and track the impact of new initiatives. The governing body ensures that the use of additional funds from the pupil premium improves the achievement of the students entitled to it.

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	112970
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	412868

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	1295
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Horne
Headteacher	Deb Hill
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
Telephone number	01298 23122
Fax number	01298 27578
Email address	headteacher@buxton.derbyshire.sch.uk

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