

The Grove School

Newcastle Road, Market Drayton, TF9 1HF

Inspection dates 19–20 September 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

- Standards in science at Key Stage 4, for many students, are below the national average.
- The number of students making the progress expected of them in mathematics at Key Stage 4 is below the national average.
- Teaching is improving but is not yet resulting in consistently good progress for all groups of students, particularly the most able.
- The sixth form requires improvement because, while A level results have steadily improved, recent AS courses have not always been suitable for all students.
- Senior leaders are improving students' achievement and the quality of teaching in the school. However, they do not always ask all subject leaders enough searching questions about the performance of their departments.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but has not always expected the swiftest possible action in tackling underachievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The school makes sure that when students leave, the vast majority go on to training, education or employment.
- There is very effective support for students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This has a positive impact on their achievement.
- Students, including the most able, make good progress in English.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Strong relationships between staff and students create an atmosphere of respect and close co-operation where students feel safe at school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher or assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspection team looked at students' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of students, senior leaders and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 39 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined the school's own data on students' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Harvey

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

Gwendoline Onyon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Grove is an average-sized secondary school. The school includes a separate sixth form known as Grove College.
- The vast majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of students who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups) is average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- Fifteen students in Year 10 and fifteen students in Year 11 attend work-related courses for one day per week, principally at two local colleges, Walford and North Shropshire College and Reaseheath College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise students' achievement, particularly at Key Stage 4, by:
 - making sure that, in science, all students develop more independent skills for completing coursework
 - teachers in mathematics giving feedback to all students on their progress and consistently sharing effective techniques for tackling underachievement
 - providing each individual student with work at the right level of difficulty and giving the most-able students sufficient challenge.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - the senior leadership team holding key subject leaders to account more closely and more regularly for the progress pupils make in their subjects
 - making sure that the school offers sixth form students courses that are appropriate to their needs
 - seeing that governors drive improvement and hold senior leaders to account for tackling the school's weaknesses swiftly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In most years students arrive at The Grove School with knowledge, skills and understanding in English and mathematics that are average. By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 4 their results in these subjects remain average and this represents achievement that requires improvement.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, rose each year from 2010 to 2012, when it was broadly in line with the national average. Students' performance in English and mathematics as individual subjects also rose to being in line with the national average in 2012. There was a moderate drop in standards at Key Stage 4 in 2013. The students who took their GCSE examinations in 2013 arrived at the school with results at Key Stage 2 that were significantly below average.
- The school sometimes uses early entry to GCSE mathematics or English for a small number of students. This is used as a way of motivating students and giving them practice in sitting examinations. Students always have the opportunity to re-take the examination at a later date and the most able students are not entered early for GCSE but aim for the highest grade at the end of the course.
- Those students who enter the school in need of additional help with their literacy are given very good support through use of funding from the Year 7 catch-up premium. Inspectors saw a lesson in which a skilled teacher gave these students high quality training in phonics and reading.
- Students' achievement in core and additional science at Key Stage 4 has been well below the national average for the last three years. However, the smaller number of students who took separate sciences at GCSE has achieved good standards. The school has made adjustments in staffing in the science department. This includes the appointment in September 2012 of a new head of science who has focused relentlessly on changing the way science is taught. The impact on standards of these changes have yet to be seen, but internal school data and course work show that students' progress in science over the last year has already improved.
- There was a significant improvement in the proportion of students who made the expected progress in English in 2012 compared to 2011 and this was above average. The proportion was broadly similar in 2013. The most able students also went on to leave the school with above average results in English in 2012 and 2013.
- In each of the last three years, the proportion of students who made the expected progress in mathematics has been broadly similar but this has been below average. There has, however, been improvement in the proportion of the most able students who have been making expected progress.
- In the last two years, students have been making expected progress in Key Stage 3 in all subject areas.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement because while their progress at A level and in work-related subjects is improving and is just above the national average, the progress of students at AS level is not. The school has recognised that AS levels do not match the needs of all students who join the sixth form and are introducing intermediate

courses to act as a bridge to further study or training.

- The school has been successful in narrowing the gap between the achievement of students who are eligible for the pupil premium, including the most able, and other students. In the last two years this gap has narrowed from being 17 months behind the others in English to being only one month behind and from being 22 months behind in mathematics to being a year behind.
- The progress of eligible students for the pupil premium compares favourably to the others in English and has stayed constant in mathematics. This success has been as a result of carefully targeted use of the pupil premium to support students in and out of class with additional staffing; reducing the number of exclusions from school and improving attendance; and the introduction of a successful literacy support programme.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other students at Key Stage 4 and better than expected progress at Key Stage 3. The resources the school provides are good and students are well supported by personal action plans and additional staffing. There is a high level of care, particularly for any students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and case studies show that the school is successful at making sure they continue to make progress in their work.
- The students who are partly educated off site on work-related courses also receive good provision. Their attendance and behaviour is monitored through close co-operation with the nearby colleges.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Until the start of this year, the teaching of science at Key Stage 4 was not good enough to make sure that students taking the core and additional courses achieved the expected standards. Students have not developed the independent skills required for successfully completing coursework, such as writing at greater length, interpreting scientific data and linking experiments to situations in real life. The quality of teaching of separate sciences has been good.
- In some mathematics lessons, particularly at Key Stage 4, students in the middle and lower sets are not receiving sufficient feedback in the marking of their work or from staff during their lessons to be able to make good progress. Inspectors confirmed these observations by talking to students and looking at their books.
- During the course of the inspection, inspectors also saw some examples of good and outstanding teaching of mathematics. For example, in one Year 10 lesson, the teacher responded quickly to some students not grasping the laws of indices and immediately asked those who did understand to use their mini-whiteboards to help those who did not. This led to swift progress and students showing highly positive attitudes to their learning.
- Inspectors saw evidence, both in English lessons and in books, of students making at least good progress. For example, in one English lesson Year 11 students were fully engaged identifying persuasive techniques in a leaflet. High level questioning from the teacher, asked with skill and humour, meant that students made exceptional progress.
- In other subjects, not all teachers offer students different tasks in lessons at the right level of difficulty for them. In some lessons this leads to groups of students, particularly the most able, not having work that provides sufficient challenge to help them make good progress.

- Sixth form students respond very positively to the teaching they receive. Many teachers will have students in their classes whom they taught in lower years and they are skilled at adapting their teaching style and relationships to allow for more independence and maturity.
- In the best lessons, teachers share their planning with support staff. When support staff are well used, they make sure that all groups of students make appropriate progress. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are very well supported both in lessons and through one-to-one support. Particularly good use is made of the school's Individual Learning Centre by a range of students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. They are courteous to staff and show respect for each other and pride in their school. Older students make good use of the school's house system to be able to support and mentor younger students.
- In the course of the inspection, whenever students were given the opportunity in lessons to engage with each other in purposeful work in pairs, in groups or as a whole class, they were consistently positive in their attitudes. They thrive on independence and respond very well to the trust that teachers put in them and this contributes to their progress.
- The school's analysis of behaviour over time is that it is good and this was confirmed through the inspection of incident logs, records of rewards and sanctions and discussions with staff and students. Exclusions have reduced significantly because of a range of strategies introduced in 2012.
- Students say they feel safe at school and the school tackles any form of bullying promptly, including internet-related incidents. The school takes preventative measures at every opportunity to ensure that all groups of students enjoy positive relationships. Students are clear and confident that if they have any concerns there are several adults they could approach.
- Students are aware that any discriminatory language will be firmly dealt with and show sensitivity to the feelings of others.
- Attendance at the school is average and improving and punctuality is good. Any absences are followed up meticulously and students spoke of the high expectations that staff have of them regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because when students are not sufficiently challenged in lessons they do not always show a consistently positive attitude to their learning.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders are not always rigorous enough in holding subject leaders to account for information about pupils' progress and the swift implementation of actions to improve achievement. This means that opportunities to tackle any underperformance are sometimes missed.
- Senior leaders encourage all students to have high aspirations and share with staff their desire to do their best for the school community. This has led to improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.

- The school's evaluation of its own performance is realistic and well focused. This includes the checking of teaching which is both regular and thorough. A wide range of training has been carried out to improve the quality of teaching and well-tailored, individual support has been given to teachers to improve their practice. Following the previous inspection, if teachers have not performed well enough they have been given effective support and their development has been closely linked to targets to manage their performance. As a result, teaching has improved.
- Checks on the use of the pupil premium are effective and its impact is clearly measured. Students' rates of progress are tracked and the school helps them through the use of additional adults and support programmes. As a result, these students make good progress. This aspect of the school's work is particularly well led and managed.
- The new sixth form leader has made sure there is good monitoring of students' progress and has increased the accountability of teachers for students' achievement. There is now a clear, strategic vision for the sixth form but this has not been in place long enough to bring about improved outcomes for students.
- The local authority offers a good range of support that is well received and the school also benefits from a partnership with other local schools.
- Preparation for future learning and employment is a strength and the careers officer works closely with any students who are not sure what to do beyond school, giving them independent and impartial advice. The number of students who are not in training, education or employment has fallen year on year and there were only a very small number of these in 2013. Every student has two weeks of carefully selected work experience and the school has won a county award for the second time in three years for the quality of its work experience programme.
- The school offers to all year groups a wide range of subjects and courses that meet the needs of students while encouraging them to broaden their horizons and have high aspirations. Examples of particularly good provision in physical education, French and art were seen during the course of the inspection.
- The school encourages students of all abilities to continue with languages in Key Stage 4 as a way of helping them to explore the wider world. Religious education makes a strong contribution to the spiritual life of the school and creates opportunities for students to experience a greater diversity of faiths and cultures than are found locally. The school has the International School Award and every year celebrates links to other countries with an international month.
- The school's leadership and governors make sure that the school meets all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding. Students personal safety is paramount and there is particularly good practice in the close monitoring of students off site in alternative provision or while on work placement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body take its duties very seriously and there is close attention to proper record keeping and making sure that all policies are signed and up to date. The Chair of Governors is very aware of the need to offer a constructive challenge to the school and the headteacher. However, the governing body has not always asked searching questions about the school's performance in specific subjects and governors have not always made sure that carefully considered actions to improve pupils' achievement are taken swiftly. They have a good grasp of data and explore the school's performance beyond the headline figures. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. They make sure students' achievement is used

as a critical measure of whether staff should move up the pay spine and have supported the headteacher in tackling any underperformance. The school's budget is being well managed at a challenging time in the school's financial history. In addition the governors are closely involved in making sure that the pupil premium is spent to good effect.

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	123580
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	427043

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
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	944
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Ingham
Headteacher	Jane Radbourne
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2011
Telephone number	01630 652121
Fax number	01630 658980
Email address	office@groveschool.eu

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