

Anthony Gell School

Wirksworth, Matlock, DE4 4DX

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Achievement dipped in 2013 and students are not making good enough progress in English. Some groups of students, such as those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, do not make good enough progress.
- Too much teaching still requires improvement. Teachers do not always match activities to the abilities of all students. The work of teaching assistants is not always planned well enough. In some lessons, questioning is not used effectively enough to support and develop students' learning.
- A-level results have not been good enough, and for this reason the sixth form still requires improvement.
- Although senior leaders monitor students' attainment systematically, they do not check in enough detail whether actions taken to improve the achievement of specific groups have really made a difference. As a consequence, leaders have not improved some aspects of teaching and achievement sufficiently.
- School data do not give a clear enough picture of the progress made by students identified as having special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. As a result, governors cannot hold senior leaders to account as well as they should for students' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is very well regarded by parents, students and staff. They are all overwhelmingly positive about its values.
- Students get on with each other exceptionally well. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and have a mature attitude to learning. Attendance is above average.
- School leaders have steadily improved several aspects of its provision over the last few years. Achievement in mathematics and in the AS results in the sixth form have improved as a result of effective actions to improve teaching.
- Achievement in humanities, languages and science is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of 72 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They analysed the results of the 54 replies to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the school's data on students' progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the school's checks on how well it is doing and school improvement plans.
- A sample of students' work was analysed, both in lessons and as part of discussions with students.

Inspection team

David Bray, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

William Cassell

Additional Inspector

Christopher Teal

Additional Inspector

Gwendoline Onyon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion are from Other British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and some other groups, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Five students in Years 10 and 11 attend part-time off-site, alternative provision, through Dales Agricultural Rural Training. Six students in Years 10 and 11 attend some shared provision with Buxton Community School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the quality of teaching good or better so all students, particularly those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, make good progress by:
 - ensuring teachers use information about students' progress more effectively when planning lessons, so that work is precisely matched to the abilities of all students within the class
 - developing teachers' skills in asking questions that enable students to deepen their learning
 - planning the work of teaching assistants more effectively so that they have a clear role in lessons and improve students' learning more.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - refining and developing the use of data to provide regular and timely information about the progress made by different groups of students, especially disabled students, those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding
 - developing the monitoring carried out by leaders, including governors, so that improving the progress made by particular student groups has a higher priority.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form and in English by:
 - extending the recent strategies to ensure closer monitoring of progress that have led to improved AS results in order to improve A-level performance
 - ensuring the target setting and monitoring of progress in English are demanding enough to enable a higher proportion of students to make good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, fell in the most recent examinations, as did the achievement of students in English. Too few students exceeded nationally expected progress in English. The proportion of students making expected progress in both English and mathematics has been close to average in recent years.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because the most recent A-level results were not good enough. The school has identified this and the most recent AS results were much improved.
- The achievement of students supported at school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs is too inconsistent and has not been monitored closely enough. Students supported at school action make broadly similar progress to their classmates.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved and is now consistently good, as is achievement in science, languages and humanities as well as several other subjects.
- In mathematics, some students are entered early for GCSE examinations. This strategy has been planned to enable all students, including the most able, to achieve well and has been successful.
- Current school data indicate that some students supported by the pupil premium are now making better progress. The funding has been spent on a range of initiatives including extra support staff to boost students' literacy and numeracy skills. However, although some of these students are now making the same progress as other students in the school, the gap between their attainment and that of other groups in the most recent examination results did not narrow. They achieved one GCSE grade lower in both mathematics and English.
- Students' skills in reading have improved as a result of a focus on reading skills in Key Stage 3. The use of Year 7 catch-up funding has been planned but not sufficiently evaluated. Students in the targeted group are making better progress than their classmates, but in some cases this is only marginal.
- Students who attend courses away from school for part of their learning are monitored effectively and are making similar progress to other students in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching still requires improvement, and as a result some of the students who have special educational needs and some of those supported by the pupil premium have not made sufficient progress.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities which meet the differing needs of students. In too many lessons the majority of students complete the same work, regardless of their ability level, and as a result some groups are not making sufficient progress.
- The quality of questioning is not consistently good. In the lessons which require improvement, teachers often ask questions that require little thought from students and do not enable them to

deepen their learning.

- Some teaching in the sixth form has not been good enough. The school has identified this as a priority and lessons observed showed students making good progress. This is resulting in better outcomes and the most recent AS results were good.
- Some teaching is outstanding and a significant proportion is good. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson on rocks, students made rapid progress because the teacher planned activities that were adapted to match the understanding of different groups of learners and used questioning effectively to gather feedback on how much they understood.
- Relationships are excellent in almost all lessons. Many teachers use humour well and create a positive atmosphere for learning. Students value and appreciate this. As a result all students get on with their work.
- Much of the marking of work and feedback given to students is of good quality.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour and safety are typically good because students behave well in lessons and around the school. Students get on well with each other and with their teachers. They display a remarkable level of maturity and speak very warmly about the positive atmosphere and strong values of the school.
- In lessons, students concentrate well and complete work they are asked to do. When given the chance they work well collaboratively, although in some lessons they have little opportunity to do so. They take pride in their work, and when asked to work independently they do so very well.
- Students' attendance is above average because they like coming to school. There are very few, if any, behavioural problems. The school has a very effective code of conduct and rewards. Students and staff understand and subscribe to these with a high level of consistency. This creates a very harmonious learning community. There have been no recent exclusions.
- Students say they feel safe at school and parents agree strongly. Students have a good understanding of the different types of bullying they might encounter, including cyber-bullying. They are very clear that they do not experience bullying and are very confident that if they did the school would deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Students are aware that they live in a multicultural society, even though their own context includes a very high proportion of White British backgrounds. They have a highly developed sense of moral values and tolerance, which they demonstrate through their actions and the way they speak to each other.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not been strong enough to ensure consistently good teaching, nor to enable all groups of pupils to make sufficient progress. There has not been sufficient focus on the progress made by different groups of students and, as a result, the school's evaluation of teaching is sometimes more optimistic than actual progress data for these groups warrants.

- The school has developed data systems which ensure information on progress is available but this has not been used regularly enough, or with sufficient precision, to ensure the progress of some groups of students is fast enough.
- The headteacher is very highly regarded by the local community. Several parents wrote unsolicited letters commenting on the work of the school. School staff are unanimous in being supportive of the school and consistently expressed how much they enjoy working there. Almost all parents would recommend the school to someone else.
- The systems to check on teachers' performance meet national requirements and follow government guidelines. Actions have been taken as a result. During the inspection, senior leaders gave good-quality feedback to teachers about how teaching could be better. This sort of feedback has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching in identified areas. For example, teaching in mathematics and in the sixth form have both improved as a result of a specific focus.
- Senior leaders have shown they have the capacity to improve the school further because several aspects have improved over the last few years, most notably in mathematics and in the sixth form.
- Subject leaders have been trained in how to carry out many aspects of their role but have not understood well enough the need to focus on the progress of different groups of students.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to follow courses that meet their needs and interests.
- The local authority has identified the school as a low priority. As a result it has provided 'light touch' support which has not enabled the school to identify some priority areas sufficiently well.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet national requirements and the school promotes equality of opportunity reasonably well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring considerable experience to the school, and are increasingly holding it to account. They have audited their skills systematically and sought expertise where they have identified gaps. They have a structured approach to undertaking appropriate training. The governing body has focused on key indicators for improvement and its members realise they have not sought detailed enough information about the progress of different groups of students. Governors understand the school's arrangements for the management of teachers' work and the need for their involvement in performance management to be stronger. Governors have a good understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and have sought to evaluate its effectiveness, but not yet in sufficient detail.

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	112968
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	428027

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	691
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brendan Quinn
Headteacher	David Baker
Date of previous school inspection	March 2009
Telephone number	01629 825577
Fax number	01629 824864
Email address	enquiries@anthonygell.derbyshire.sch.uk

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