

Ecclesfield School

Chapelton Road, Ecclesfield, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S35 9WD

Inspection dates

9–10 October 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 make good progress. The proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen strongly over three years and is now above average.
- Attainment in English is above average because teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. There are examples of outstanding teaching across several subjects, including history and geography.
- Deaf students make good progress because they have access to the same good quality teaching as their peers.
- The headteacher provides clear vision and direction. Together with senior leaders' relentless focus on standards, this has ensured that students' achievement, attendance and behaviour have all improved, and that teaching has remained good.
- A good range of after-school clubs gives students varied opportunities to be healthy, learn new skills and get involved in the community.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold school leaders to account well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in mathematics is improving but students are not yet making the same rapid progress as in English.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that meet the needs of every student: sometimes all students in the class complete the same work.
- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium is rising but it is not yet as good as that of other students.
- Not all students have a good understanding of communities beyond their own and so are not as well prepared as they could be for their lives after school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 52 lessons, six of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 80 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and analysed the results of the staff questionnaire to which 62 replies were received.
- 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.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dr Wendy Bradford

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Mary Lanovy-Taylor

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Dr Sheila Kaye

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most secondary schools.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority and those from armed services personnel families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school hosts the local authority hearing impairment unit for eight students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Thirty-four students, mainly in Years 10 and 11, attend off-site alternative provision for part of their learning at a range of providers, including Dimensions, Pathways, Pitstop, Sheffield School of Beauty, Sheaf, GTA Doncaster, CDC for Construction, Spring Lane and St Bernard's.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further in mathematics by increasing the numbers of students who make better than expected progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding overall by ensuring all teachers use the information about students' abilities, gained from the school's new systems for tracking students' attainment, to plan work which is tailored to meet all students' needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - monitoring the progress of students supported by the pupil premium more closely and implementing carefully-targeted plans to ensure their achievement continues to rise
 - further supporting students' understanding of communities beyond their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good because students make good overall progress across the range of subjects.
- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen strongly over recent years, as a result of senior leaders' relentless focus on raising attainment. In 2013, an above average proportion of students achieved the English Baccalaureate. Students' achievement on a range of BTEC courses is also good.
- In 2013, the proportion of most-able students attaining A* and A grades increased in several subjects, including English, biology, electronics and chemistry. In art, students also achieved high numbers of top grades, reflecting well on the school's specialism.
- In English, standards are consistently above average because teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. As a result, much higher numbers of students make good or better progress than is expected nationally.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers nationally. Their achievement is improving as a result of new and focused leadership of special educational needs and the broad range of alternative provision on offer. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. Deaf students supported by specialist provision make good progress.
- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium is steadily improving. Although the attainment gap between those students known to be eligible for free school meals and other students in the school, their attainment is still half a grade behind their peers in English and almost a grade behind in mathematics. Senior leaders are now monitoring the progress of students supported by the pupil premium even more closely.
- Students' progress in mathematics is improving and is now in line with that expected nationally. The school has discontinued its policy of early entry in GCSE mathematics because this has impeded students' good progress in the past as relatively few students achieved the top grades at GCSE.
- Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to both fund extra staffing to support weaker readers and provide resources such as video recorders, dictaphones and texts for paired reading. As a result, the students receiving this support made good progress.
- The attendance and progress of the small number of students who study off-site for part of their learning are monitored closely by the school through termly reports and teacher visits. These students are positive about their learning and achieve well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching across a number of subjects, including English, history and geography.
- In the best lessons, relationships are strong. Teachers use questioning well to probe students for more detailed answers and to check their understanding, and the quality of marking is good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons with a range of activities which interest and motivate students and enable them to learn from each other. For example, students in a Year 10 geography lesson made outstanding progress in both their understanding of urbanisation and their communication skills by working together in groups under the teacher's expert direction and guidance.
- Senior leaders have worked diligently to make sure that teachers in all subjects help to develop students' literacy, numeracy and skills for learning through the school's 'Eccoskills' initiative. Literacy provision, in particular, is strong. Initiatives such as the 'pop-up library' have helped to raise the profile of reading with more reluctant readers.
- Proactive and responsive teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the progress of

disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Deaf students receive the same good quality teaching as other students in the school because they are fully integrated in lessons.

- In a minority of lessons which require improvement, teachers are not using information about students' abilities to plan work which is tailored to meet all students' needs. As a result, students of different abilities complete the same work. This has been more prevalent in mathematics teaching over time. Students in Year 10 art make good progress because the teacher identifies individual targets for each student but this approach is not widespread across all subject areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Behaviour is typically good or better in lessons because students display positive attitudes to learning. Students get on well with each other and relationships with staff are good. Around the school, students generally behave in a responsible manner so that break and lunchtimes are orderly.
- Students receive good care and support because senior leaders are committed to their well-being.
- Overall attendance is now broadly average. Fixed-term exclusions are rapidly reducing and older students speak positively about improvements in students' behaviour since they have been at the school.
- Students' opinions are often canvassed by senior leaders when reviewing aspects of the school's work. The active school council also gives students the opportunity to have their views heard.
- Parents and students agree that students are safe in school. School behaviour records confirm that leaders take all instances of bullying very seriously, including cyber and homophobic bullying.
- Nevertheless, inspectors found that not all students understand the different forms that bullying can take because a very small minority do not yet have a developed understanding of diversity, which means that some students are not as kind as they might be to others who are different from them.
- Senior leaders are addressing this rigorously through personal, social and health education lessons, and support and guidance from form tutors.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher provides a clear vision and direction for the school. Together with the senior team, he has secured the school's three-year track record of improving students' attainment. Parents and staff recognise this success and give leaders their full backing.
- School improvement plans identify the right priorities because senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Good use is made of external consultants to validate leaders' judgements. As a result, school development plans are well focused.
- New systems for tracking students' attainment are currently being introduced so that students become much more aware of their target grades. Senior leaders are now more closely tracking the progress of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals to ensure that their attainment continues to get closer to that of other students in the school. The effective management of the provision for students with special educational needs has contributed well to their improved achievement.
- Leaders hold teachers to account through rigorous systems of lesson observation, work scrutiny and subject reviews. Teachers' pay progression is closely linked to the national Teachers' Standards and students' good progress.
- Good systems are in place to support both teachers who are less confident and those who aspire

to be outstanding. Collaborative working with four other schools has strengthened the quality of subject leadership. Several teachers identified as 'lead teachers' make a valuable contribution to training time by guiding others in developing innovative practice.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strengthened through the school's specialist status and good teaching in religious education. For example, Year 8 students made good progress in their understanding of Islam as a result of expertly planned opportunities for class discussion.
- Students speak positively about the large number of school productions and after-school sporting and other activities on offer. Students are encouraged to develop their sense of community. For example, students produced planters for 'Chapeltown in Bloom' and have been involved in the community garden project.
- The range of subjects provides an appropriate balance of academic, practical and vocational learning that matches students' needs and abilities. Above average numbers of students go on to further study, work or employment as a result of the good independent careers advice and guidance they receive.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this good and improving school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure the behaviour and safety of students when attending off-site provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a good level of challenge to the school. Governors understand school performance data and are determined to ensure that the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals continues to improve so that it matches that of other students in the school. Governors understand the school's arrangements for the management of teachers' work and the link between good teaching and salary progression. Governors are determined to build further upon their good practice and are currently completing a skills audit.

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	107142
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	427368

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1714
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Walker
Headteacher	Joel Wirth
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2011
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