

Manshead CofE VA Upper School

Dunstable Road, Caddington, Luton, LU1 4BB

Inspection dates

6-7 November 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

- In 2011 and 2013, the proportion of students who achieved five good GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, was average. In 2012 it was significantly below average.
- The proportion of students who make the progress that is expected of them nationally in English is below average. The proportion who exceed expected progress in English is also below average.
- Teachers do not always use student achievement data as well as they should. This means that lessons are not always accurately matched to the different skills and abilities of students, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus and students with autistic spectrum disorders.
- Marking and feedback which is given to students is not always as effective as it should be.
- Sometimes lessons do not proceed quickly enough which results in some students making slower progress than they are capable of making.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not improved teaching and achievement quickly enough in English.
- Some subject leaders do not have all the skills required to improve teaching and achievement effectively.
- The targets which are set to help teachers improve their work are not always precise enough.
- The governing body does not check teaching and achievement in sufficient detail.

The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is good because students make good progress. Sometimes students make outstanding progress, particularly in Year 13.
- Leaders and managers are successfully improving teaching and achievement in many subjects.
- Students supported by the pupil premium are making better progress than they have in the past and their achievement is getting closer to that of other students.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students feel safe at school and they are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- Attendance has improved considerably during the past year is now above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students from all year groups including the sixth form. Other meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 86 responses to the online parent questionnaire Parent View as well as a questionnaire which the school asks parents to complete. They also analysed 61 responses from a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and data on students' progress.
- The lead inspector held two separate telephone discussions with a representative from the local authority and a consultant who works with the school.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Bartlett	Additional Inspector
Peter Lacey-Hastings	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector
Jeffery Plumb	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly higher than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic heritages is much lower than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for certain groups such as students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Some students in Years 10 and 11 study courses in a range of work-related subjects for one day each week at Barnfield College.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs which supports eight students with autistic spectrum disorders.
- 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 and achievement in the main school so that they are consistently good or better, particularly in English, by ensuring that:
 - student achievement data is effectively used so that work is always accurately matched to the different skills and abilities of all students, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus and students with autistic spectrum disorders
 - marking and feedback to students is appropriately frequent and helps students to improve their work
 - lessons proceed at a fast pace so that students can learn quickly.
- Improve the impact that leaders and managers have on improving teaching and achievement in the main school by making sure that:
 - a specialist leader of English is secured as soon as possible
 - teachers are fully informed of the specific needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus and students with autistic spectrum disorders
 - all subject leaders have the skills required to monitor teaching and achievement effectively and use the information to make any necessary improvements
 - the targets which are set for teachers to help them improve their work are always precise in stating how teaching needs improving.
- Improve governance so that it effectively influences improvements in teaching and achievement by:
 - ensuring that it receives appropriately detailed information about the progress that different groups of students are making in all subjects and year groups
 - making sure that the governing body is able to compare the school's performance with the performance of all schools nationally.

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

- Students who completed Year 11 in 2011 and 2013 achieved average standards but in 2012 achievement was significantly below average.
- The proportion of students who make the progress that is expected of them nationally in English is below average. Similarly, the proportion who make more rapid progress in English is also below average. This is because teaching and leadership have been too variable.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not consistently make good progress, particularly those supported at school action plus. This is because work is not always pitched at the right level for these students when they are in classes in the main school.
- Students who are supported in the specially resourced unit with autistic spectrum disorders make good and sometimes outstanding progress when they are supported by specialist staff. However, their progress is much slower when these students work in classes in the main school because other staff are not always aware of how to support them effectively.
- The small number of students who speak English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority heritages make nationally expected progress. This is because teaching is often well matched to the skills and abilities of these students.
- The school spends the pupil premium in a variety of ways including, for example, on additional staff who provide academic and pastoral support for individual students. Students of all abilities who are supported through the pupil premium are making better progress than they have in the past and the achievement of this group of students is getting closer to that of other students. This year, eligible students in Year 11 achieved, on average, a third of a grade lower than other students in English and half a grade lower in mathematics. This is a significant improvement on previous years.
- The school enters a small proportion of students for GCSE mathematics earlier than at the end of Year 11. This has proved to be an effective strategy because the school accurately identifies which students will achieve their potential by sitting the examination early.
- Achievement is improving in many subjects. In 2013, Year 11 students made good progress in work related courses, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, for example.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress in many subjects. This is because teachers have a detailed understanding of the students' levels of attainment as well as examination requirements so that work is appropriately challenging for each student. Sometimes, particularly in Year 13, students make outstanding progress. The proportion of students in both Year 12 and Year 13 who achieve higher grades is improving.
- The students who attend Barnfield College to study work-related courses make good progress because the courses are well matched to the students' interests. In 2013, all students passed their courses.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it has been too variable in recent years, particularly in English. This is the main reason why teaching is not good.
- Not enough teaching is as well matched to the skills and abilities of different students as it should be. This is because some teachers do not always use the information that they have about students' attainment as effectively as they should. Consequently, work is sometimes too hard or too easy for some students.
- The quality of marking and feedback which is given to students does not always have a good enough impact on the progress that students make. This is because it is sometimes too infrequent or it does not clearly help students to identify what they need to do to improve their work by.
- Some teachers spend too long providing introductions and explanations which results in lessons progressing too slowly and students not learning as quickly as they should. Sometimes, activities last too long and students lose concentration.
- Many teachers are not as informed as they should be about the specific learning needs of students with autistic spectrum disorders. Consequently, these students do not always make good progress in some subjects when they are in classes in the main school. In addition, not all teachers are appropriately trained to help these students learn effectively.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning because they have a good understanding of individual students' strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they are able to provide support at the right level.
- Teaching in many subjects is improving. Good and better teaching is characterised by teachers who have good subject knowledge combined with a good understanding of examination requirements. This helps teachers to plan work which is appropriately challenging for all students. For example, in a Year 11 science lesson students were fully engaged in the work because the teacher had high expectations of how all students had the potential to reach the highest grades.
- Teaching in the sixth form is frequently good and sometimes it is outstanding, particularly in Year 13. For example, in a Year 13 German lesson students made good progress because the teacher very skilfully used a range of different types of questions to appropriately challenge each student.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The majority of students behave well in lessons and at break times. They are respectful of each other and of their teachers and most are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- Bullying is rare and as a result students feel safe at school. On the occasions when bullying incidents do occur, students are confident that staff deal with matters quickly and effectively. Students have a good awareness of the various forms of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Students have a good understanding of safety matters, including e-safety, for example. They are appropriately equipped with the skills to manage risk in a range of potentially unsafe situations.

- Attendance has improved over the past year and it is above average. Students attend school regularly and arrive on time.
- Teachers provide students with a good level of support for their personal development and well being. This effectively ensures that students feel safe and happy at school. Students appreciate this support when it is needed.
- When students are taught well they demonstrate good attitudes to learning by trying their best and working hard. When teaching is not as good as it should be some students lose concentration and their attitudes to learning are not as good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not improved teaching and achievement in English as quickly as they should have. Although leaders were successful in improving achievement in 2013 after the disappointing 2012 results, achievement in recent years has not been good.
- Leaders have made sure that students' behaviour and attitudes to learning have remained good since the previous inspection and they have improved attendance significantly.
- Students' achievement in many subjects is improving but there is some variation. The inconsistencies which exist are as a result of some subject leaders not having fully developed skills to monitor teaching and achievement effectively. While they check teaching and achievement with senior leaders, which is helping to develop their skills, there remains some unevenness.
- Leaders have not given teachers sufficient training to plan work which is well matched to the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus and students with autistic spectrum disorders.
- All teachers are set targets to improve their teaching and guide decisions about pay increases. The targets which are set are not always as specific as they should be in identifying particular aspects of teaching which need improving. Consequently, the process of setting targets for teachers does not have a consistently good impact on the quality of teaching and achievement.
- The sixth form is led and managed well, and this is a key reason why achievement is good. Leaders have a good understanding of students' needs and they provide good levels of support. Progress is monitored rigorously and any underachievement is identified early. Before joining the sixth form, students receive adequate independent advice and guidance about the courses they are planning to study and the career options that these courses can lead to.
- Leaders and managers are successfully improving the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium. These students are making better progress than they have in the past.
- The headteacher ensures that staff are appropriately challenged and supported to help students achieve well. Where teaching or leadership falls short of his expectations he ensures that timely interventions are put into place.
- There is a commitment on the part of most teachers to help all students have equal chances to

succeed but some teachers do not fully challenge all students consistently. This means that on the occasions when students' needs are not fully met that some students do not always have the same opportunities as others to succeed.

- The curriculum is planned effectively to meet the needs of students. For example, additional mathematics and English lessons are provided for students who need this support and students of different abilities follow a different number of examination courses in Key Stage 4. A range of trips and visits make the curriculum more exciting for students as well as help them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and awareness.
- The local authority has supported the school in helping some teachers to follow training courses to improve their teaching as well as providing funding for the school to engage a consultant. This support has contributed to overall improvements in teaching but has not yet had enough impact on the most important improvements required in English.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body does not always check the progress of all groups of students in all year groups and subjects. Governors do not regularly compare the schools' performance with that of others schools nationally. Consequently, it cannot be sure that aspects of the schools' performance are good enough and is not able to influence improvements in teaching and achievement as well as it should.
- Relevant governors monitor the use and impact of the additional pupil premium funding and they are aware that this is now providing better value for money than it has in the past because eligible students are making better progress.
- The governing body is aware of how targets are set for teachers and monitor how these targets are linked to pay increases. It knows what the school is doing to tackle underperformance. It makes sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.

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	109705
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	425323

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1080
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Short
Headteacher	Jim Parker
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2011
Telephone number	01582 679400
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