

John Flamsteed Community School

Derby Road, Denby, Ripley, DE5 8NP

Inspection dates 21–22 November 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Students do not make consistently good progress across the school. Boys, in particular do less well than girls and standards across subjects vary.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to make sure that work is pitched at the right level. It is sometimes too hard or too easy.
- Lessons do not always proceed at a brisk pace so students sometimes lose focus on their learning and do not have enough time to do work on their own.
- Students do not always receive high quality feedback in lessons and marking so they know the steps to improve. Questioning is not always used well to challenge students to think deeply.
- The system for checking on students' progress is very complicated. This makes it harder for staff to understand and agree how well students are doing. It also means governors do not hold senior leaders sharply to account for students' progress.
- Observations of teaching are not tightly focused on how much progress students make and teachers are not always given clear steps to improve their teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students who achieved five good GCSEs including English and mathematics improved in 2013, addressing the dip in 2012.
- Students achieve well on the vocational courses that are offered in partnership with other providers.
- Attendance is above average.
- Students behave well around the school and say that they feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 35 lessons or part-lessons. Three of these observations were with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed leaders feeding back to staff on students' learning and progress in lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, governors and a local authority representative.
- The inspection team considered the responses to the 66 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and reviewed records on students' recent attainment and progress, students' work in their books, documents evaluating the school's work and plans for the future. They studied records relating to the management of the performance of staff and minutes of meetings of the governing body as well as safeguarding, behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard White	Additional Inspector
Paul Armitage	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupils premium funding, additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, is below average.
- The school receives Year 7 and 8 catch-up funding for a few students. This is additional government funding for students who did not reach the expected level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A small number of students attend local schools and Derby College for part of the week to study vocational courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better and students, especially boys, make more progress, so achievement rises, by ensuring:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan work for all students so it is not too hard or too easy
 - lessons proceed at a brisk pace with more opportunities for students to work independently so they are more involved in the learning process
 - the standard of feedback and marking improves to match that of the best, so students know how to improve their work
 - teachers' questioning is better used so it encourages students to think for themselves and involves students more in taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - establishing a simple system for monitoring students' progress that is used and understood by all staff and enables governors to hold senior leaders to account for how well students do
 - focusing judgements of teaching more closely on the progress that students make in lessons and over time and giving teachers clearer feedback on how to improve.
- 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 do not make consistently good progress throughout the school in different year groups and across subjects. Although standards improved in some areas in 2013, there is variation between performance in different subject areas at GCSE level. Amongst students currently in the school, boys commonly make slower progress than girls. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is not quick enough to ensure students remain focused on their learning.
- The proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics fell from the broadly average level in 2011 to below average in 2012. Students made less progress overall in this year group, particularly in English. However, standards improved in 2013 and were similar to the 2012 national levels with students making better progress.
- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE grades A* to G has remained above the national average over the last three years. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSE's improved by 20% in 2013 and standards rose in English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are given extra help in lessons and in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. In some cases this has had a striking impact on students' achievement and the school's stable environment has supported some students to do well. However, progress for this group of students is not consistently good across the school.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding were half a grade behind other students in English in 2012 and well over a grade behind in mathematics where they made much slower progress than others. The school is now using the funding much more effectively to provide a range of small group and one-to-one tuition as well as additional teachers in core subject areas, a range of mentors and support for students to attend college courses. Although progress for these students is not yet good across the school, it is improving in both mathematics and English. In the school's provisional results in 2013, the attainment gap in English had narrowed considerably. The gap narrowed in mathematics but not as much, because all students made much better progress.
- The school checks carefully on the small number of students who attend other providers for part of the week to study vocational courses. This provision is effective and these students achieve well on these courses.
- The Year 7 and 8 catch-up funding is used well to provide small group and one-to-one tuition. This is effective; these students are making faster progress and catching up with others in the school. This shows the school's drive to secure equality of opportunity for its learners.
- The school does not routinely use early entry for GCSEs. Some students took English and mathematics GCSEs early in 2013 and the school plans to give students the opportunity to sit exams early where they think this may benefit individuals or classes. Students who do not meet their targets have the opportunity to re-sit the examination. This policy does not disadvantage students in the school, including the most able. Able students make similar progress to others.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good, including in English and mathematics, and this means that

students do not make consistently good progress across the school and in different subject areas. Teachers do not always use assessment information carefully to make sure work is planned to be the right level. It is sometimes too easy for more-able students and too hard for less-able students.

- Lessons do not always proceed at a brisk pace and this means that on occasions, students make less progress as they lose some focus on their learning. They also become less involved when they do not have enough opportunities to learn by themselves. Teachers question students in lessons but their questioning does not always develop deeper thinking or involve students reflecting on each other's views and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- There are examples of marking which gives students clear feedback on how to improve their work but this is not consistent across departments or the school. Students are not always clear about how their work could be improved from marking and from teachers' comments in lessons.
- In the best teaching, questioning was used well to develop students' thinking, there was a quick pace and students often worked independently on their research and a range of different activities which ensured their good progress. For example in Year 11 religious education lesson, students were completing a comparative analysis of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. They concentrated hard and worked rapidly.
- Common strengths of teaching across the school are teachers subject knowledge and their use of interactive whiteboards. There are positive relationships between teachers and students in lessons and most students apply themselves to different activities well.
- The school is focusing on developing reading and has students who mentor younger ones in form periods. There is a new leader developing the use of literacy across the school. However, this initiative is in its early stages and its impact cannot yet be seen in good progress in literacy across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students do not always have positive attitudes to learning in all lessons and boys in particular occasionally lose some focus in their learning if tasks are a little easy or the pace of learning is slow, particularly in long teacher introductions to lessons.
- Behaviour around the school is usually good. There is a good system in place for managing behaviour. Sanctions are not used very often, but include a time-out room and detentions, which the school uses effectively. Students are positive about the rewards they receive including headteacher commendations, praise certificates and postcards home.
- Students say they feel safe in school and most parents responding to the online questionnaire agree. Students are aware of different types of bullying and although they say bullying does happen, they are confident they can talk to staff and they will sort it out.
- The school deals sensitively with a range of topics so students are helped to stay safe in modern day society. These include the risks associated with extremism due to recent events in the local area. Students have opportunities to discuss topical issues in lessons and there are regular assemblies. The school ensures positive relationships are promoted and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated; the few racial incidents that have occurred were dealt with and there have been no recent issues.

- Attendance remained above national averages from 2010-2012 and this level of attendance has been sustained over the last year.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as some weaknesses in tracking progress have slowed improvements to teaching. Although there is a system for tracking students' progress, this is very complicated and not understood by all staff so everyone knows how well students are doing and governors can hold senior leaders to account for the progress students make.
- Although leaders observe teaching regularly, judgements are not always closely focused on the progress that students and groups of students make in lessons, nor double checked against the progress students make over time. This means that teaching may appear better than it is. Teachers are not always given clear enough feedback from observations on how teaching can be improved.
- Nevertheless, the school took appropriate action to improve following the dip in results in 2012. Weaknesses were addressed and so results rose in 2013. Subject leaders are developing in their roles and there were improvements in a number of areas in 2013. The school can show examples of where teachers have been supported effectively to improve their teaching.
- The school has updated its procedures for the management of staff performance in line with national guidelines. Targets are set for teachers each year linked to students' progress, whole school priorities and individual areas of focus. These are reviewed three times a year to check on progress.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects and choices at GCSE level. The school also provides the opportunity for students to study work-related courses at a number of local schools and the college, to ensure students can access the areas which will help them achieve well. The school provides the opportunity for students to study astronomy as well as providing an annual astronomy trip to Russia. There is also an annual Japanese exchange. These opportunities along with regular assemblies and opportunities for reflection and discussion in lessons promote positive attitudes to school, and increasingly to learning, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students are very positive about the support the school provides for them to help them decide what to do when they leave the school. The school arranges events with other providers so students can see what opportunities are on offer and talk to staff about what will suit them the best.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to support students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school is aware of the challenges posed by the open nature of the site. It is currently reviewing its arrangements in order to strengthen measures to keep students safe at all times.
- The local authority provides light touch support including an annual review of standards as the school was judged as good at its previous inspection. Following the drop in results in 2012 some support was provided to the English department to review the examination performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is not fully effective because weaknesses in the information governors receive

limits the challenge they can provide. Governors receive updates from the headteacher on the published data on the school and are aware that standards dipped in 2012. They receive information on students' progress but it is not clear from this exactly how much progress students and groups of students are making. This means that although governors know how pupil premium funding is being spent, they are less clear about how much difference this is making. They ensure the systems for the management of staff performance are in place and receive anonymised updates on targets set for teachers and whether they have been achieved. They sign off pay awards for teachers who teach well and are aware of where previous underperformance has been tackled. Governors receive updates from the headteacher about the quality of teaching in the school but do not link this with the progress students make. Governors attend regular training and use the professional expertise of governors to support key roles; for example the Chair of the Finance Committee has a finance background.

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	112948
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	429960

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	604
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Stephens
Headteacher	Danny Holden
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2012
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