

# Ellis Guilford School and Sports College

Bar Lane, Basford, Nottingham, NG6 0HT

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- The GCSE mathematics results have been consistently low over the last three years. Students make much slower progress in this subject than other students of similar ability nationally.
- The more-able students in English make slower progress than similar students nationally.
- Too few students gain two GCSE qualifications in science.
- Disadvantaged students who are eligible for extra government funding achieve less well than others. The gap in performance has not shown any sign of closing over the last three years.
- Not enough teaching is engaging and exciting. In too many lessons, students are well behaved but bored. The pace of learning is sometimes too slow and there is not enough challenge.
- Although improved, attendance is still below average.
- Some students and a proportion of the parents say that sometimes, poor behaviour disrupts learning.
- Leaders and managers have not yet gained the confidence of all students and parents because of poor communication.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governing body are setting high expectations about improving the school. Leaders are robustly tackling underachievement and poor teaching and there are signs of improvement.
- The school's internal inclusion faculty provides exceptionally good support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders have recently improved systems to monitor students' progress and to check on the quality of teaching. These systems are now good, but they have not yet had time to show impact in improved results.
- The school has responded well to some incidents of homophobic bullying. It is now a more harmonious community with greater acceptance and tolerance of diversity.

## Information about this inspection

- The school received one day’s notice of this inspection.
- Inspectors observed parts of 35 lessons. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed the conduct of students around the school and at break times.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and middle leaders such as the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. They also talked with teachers and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with many different groups of students from all year groups; sometimes formally, sometimes during breaks. Some students completed questionnaires about aspects of their school experience.
- The school’s improvement plan and self-evaluation were scrutinised.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work and school documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, policies, assessment information and students’ records.
- The inspection took into account the views of the 28 parents who completed the online Parent View survey and comments received from parents by telephone and email.
- The views of 33 staff who completed questionnaires or wrote comments about the school were also considered.

## Inspection team

John Peckham, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional Inspector
Bob Roberts	Additional Inspector
Richard Masterton	Additional Inspector
Peter McKenzie	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Ellis Guilford School is larger than most secondary schools.
- A high proportion of students come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There is also high proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for extra government funding, because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after or for other reasons, is much higher than in most schools.
- A high proportion of students have special educational needs supported at 'school action' level. There is also a high proportion who are supported at 'school action plus' level or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Fourteen students in Key Stage 4 have part of their curriculum in work-based contexts in the locality, in nine different training providers.
- The school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for examination results in 2013.
- The present headteacher joined the school in April 2012. Her appointment followed a two-year period where the school was led by two deputy headteachers and a part-time executive headteacher.
- During the last three years, the school has been partially rebuilt and the construction process created some significant disruption. This process is now complete.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - encouraging the school's good and outstanding teachers to be more creative and less formulaic in their planning, so that more lessons are fast-paced, exciting and interesting
  - rapidly building the skills of the less effective teachers so that they are able to apply some shared techniques more appropriately
  - ensuring that teachers plan different activities to match the needs of students as well as allowing for different outcomes in each lesson
  - making time for students to respond to teachers' marking by correcting work or extending their learning
  - ensuring that there is always enough challenge for the more-able students in each lesson.
- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, in science, for disadvantaged students and for more-able students in English.
- Further improve attendance and behaviour by:
  - developing more ways to encourage parents and students to work with the school to promote good attendance
  - ensuring that lessons and other activities offer greater interest and engagement to students
  - building better relationships between students and staff so that there is greater student

involvement in improving behaviour

- providing training for staff in a wider variety of approaches to prevent challenging behaviour from disturbing learning.
- 
- Enhance the communication with and participation of parents so that they feel more involved and able to contribute to the improvement of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students join this school with Key Stage 2 results that are significantly below those in most schools. Overall standards of attainment when these students leave the school are much lower than in most schools. In 2012, results were below the government's minimum standards, in 2013, they were just above.
- In the last three years, the progress that students made from their different starting points in mathematics has been consistently below that of students of similar ability nationally. The underachievement has been greatest among the more-able students. In lessons observed during the inspection, achievement was better, but this improvement has not yet had time to show in examination results. The school has entered some students early for mathematics GCSEs in order to increase the proportion gaining a C grade. There is some evidence that this has been partly responsible for too few students gaining the top grades. A smaller proportion is entered early in English.
- The achievement of students in English has improved over the last three years, particularly for the less-able who, in 2013, made slightly better progress than similar students nationally. More-able students, however, have not improved their outcomes in the same way, and the proportion that make better than expected progress has remained significantly below the national figure.
- The percentage of students gaining the equivalent of two GCSEs in science has increased over the last two years but it is still well below that of similar students elsewhere in the country.
- Disadvantaged students, whose circumstances make them eligible for extra government funding, achieve much less well than others. Their GCSE results are, on average, one grade lower in each subject they sit. They also make less progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. The 2013 examination results showed that this gap in performance had not closed, although the school's own data indicate that it is expected to close in 2014.
- Although students who speak English as an additional language achieved slightly lower results than others did, in 2013, the gap in performance was smaller than seen nationally.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs has, in the past, been much lower than that of other students. However, there have been some rapid improvements in the leadership and management of this aspect of the school. Because of this, fewer students are now on the special needs register; they are better provided for and are making better progress in school. A small number of students take part in external work-based learning. These are mostly students at risk of serious underachievement who have maintained confidence, motivation and a possible route to further education through these courses.
- About a quarter of students completing examinations in 2013 came from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds and only one group, White and Black Caribbean, had enough students to draw any conclusions about their progress as a group. Though this group do underachieve, this is not to the same extent as other groups.
- A significant proportion of students do not have a good enough ability in reading or writing when they join the school to access properly a typical secondary school curriculum. The school has some effective provision to improve students' skills, but not all teachers make sufficient adjustment to their teaching and planning to meet their needs. The development of students' speaking and listening skills, although a school focus, has yet to show any significant impact in

their examination results.

- Extra funding to help Year 7 students to catch up in English and mathematics has been spent on new reading materials, a summer holiday course for some students and extra one-to-one tutoring. The school's analysis indicates that the 14 students who have received the additional tutoring in mathematics have on average made good progress since September. This is much better than would be expected. The average progress of the 29 students who have received extra tutoring in English is slightly better than expected, but is not yet good.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- The proportions of lessons observed during the inspection that were good or required improvement, were about the same. Inspectors saw a very small number of outstanding or inadequate lessons. Some common features prevented many lessons from being more effective.
- Although teachers are planning for different levels of attainment in each lesson, students with different needs are sometimes unable to make good progress because of the lack of specific learning activities planned for them. Many lessons follow a standard formula. Teachers spend too much time planning, and reviewing, which restricts the time available to acquire new knowledge and practise new skills. Expectations are sometimes too low, leading to a slow pace of learning. In these lessons, too many students find learning uninteresting.
- Marking is variable in quality. In the best cases, teachers highlight exactly where students need to make improvements or corrections, students have the time to make these improvements and there is evidence of a written dialogue between each student and the teacher. In many cases, however, although marking is regular and thorough, with tips for improvement, there is no evidence that students are given the time to act on the advice. Some books are marked insufficiently frequently or in insufficient detail.
- Some teachers do not use their time questioning students effectively. In many weaker lessons, there are too few opportunities for students to explore, discuss and enquire about topics and so deepen their understanding and knowledge. While most students are obedient, they are passive, with a lack of enthusiasm for learning.
- In contrast, inspectors saw some examples of very good teaching. In a good Year 7 music lesson, for example, students were quickly engaged in pairs, one clapping out a rhythm while their partner acted as mentor, providing feedback. In an outstanding Year 7 mathematics lesson, excellent use of technology and high-quality classroom management ensured a brisk and engaging introduction to algebra.
- The better teaching provides students with challenging learning goals and a well-planned sequence of tasks and activities to help them succeed. Teachers ask questions in ways that make all students think hard and responses are not just sought from those who raise their hands to answer. Teachers use learning resources creatively, including video sequences, visualisers and interactive whiteboards to enhance their teaching and enthuse the students.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Attendance at Ellis Guilford School has been among the lowest of secondary schools in the country for several years. Recent concerted action by the school has resulted in an improvement, but attendance is still below the average for similar schools elsewhere. The attendance of disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs has also

improved substantially, but, in both cases, it remains below average.

- The proportion of students with very poor attendance (below 85%) is also high. Although the proportion reduced substantially in 2012, it did not improve further in 2013. Complex personal challenges, including bereavement, parenthood and family substance misuse, cause some students' persistent poor attendance. The school has worked hard with students that face these sorts of barriers, with some success. Several students spoken with, however, were clear that they chose not to attend regularly because they found school 'boring'.
- The number of exclusions from the school for poor behaviour has reduced steadily over the last two years but is still above the national average.
- Most students feel safe and are reasonably happy in school. Many students spoken with, however, said that confrontation between one or two challenging students and their teacher sometimes disturbs lessons. A high proportion of the parents who gave their views also said that they did not think the school managed behaviour well. General low-level disruption of learning is not common and was only once observed by an inspector. Behaviour around the school at break times and change of lessons is mostly orderly and good-natured. Most students show respect and courtesy to adults and to one another.
- Some of the students spoken with during the inspection were not confident that the school had effective strategies to deal with bullying. A concern expressed by several students from different year groups was that not all teachers were prepared to listen to students' points of view or their side of the story. Students singled out some teachers as exceptions to this. Disabled students and those with special educational needs were more confident about the ability of staff to deal effectively with bullying.
- The conflicting evidence partly indicates the school's rapid change over the last two years. Behaviour has improved, but a cohesive staff team, has not yet fully won the trust and confidence of most students. Much behaviour is more compliant than cooperative, and the new reward system, introduced in September 2013, has yet to deliver any tangible rewards to the many students whose behaviour is good.
- A significant example of the improvement in the overall school climate was provided by some students who had experienced homophobic bullying. From little understanding or support available at the school four years ago, some significant improvements have been made in the school's approach to equalities and protecting the well-being of minorities. A 'Rainbow Group' for lesbian, bisexual, gay and transsexual students now operates in the school and attitudes are much improved. Not all students fully understand the implications of homophobic language yet and some staff are not yet fully skilled in how to deal with it, but the school is a safer place.
- Most but not all students spoken with said that racism and religious intolerance were not a problem at the school.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- The headteacher sets high expectations and provides strong leadership for the school. She has won the confidence and support of school staff and has made significant improvements in the overall leadership and management of the school. Many of these improvements, however, have not yet had the opportunity to show in better outcomes for students. So, despite some improvements in English and science and in the overall quality of teaching, in behaviour and in attendance, much remains to be done.



- Some inadequate teaching has been successfully tackled and a personalised programme of professional development is being introduced and improved. Performance management has taken close account of the quality of teaching and governors have withheld pay progression where teaching is not good enough.
- The school has a reasonably accurate picture of its own strengths and weaknesses and the school improvement plan highlights broadly similar priorities to those identified in this inspection. Where lessons were jointly observed, school leaders' judgements closely matched those of inspectors.
- There is evidence that actions to improve literacy are beginning to have some impact. Leaders have reviewed and revised the curriculum to adapt to the needs of students. There are some very effective courses, such as horticulture and construction, which are providing motivating and meaningful learning for students as well as a potential route to employment. Leaders are planning to reduce the use of early entry to examinations, a strategy that has given some students a second chance to gain a pass grade but may be contributing to the lower rates of progress of the more-able students.
- The curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is particularly strong and well led. The school's inclusion faculty provides a haven for some more-vulnerable students. Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants provide some very specific and high-quality teaching in social and life skills, fine motor skills and all aspects of communication. Some students have a curriculum that includes work-based placements outside school. They are well monitored and make good progress.
- Although extra funding to support disadvantaged students (the pupil premium) has been quite specifically targeted to help these students, there is no obvious evidence of improvement in their examination results. Many actions and initiatives have only recently been established and it is too soon to be able to evaluate their impact fully.
- The parents who expressed a view about the school through Parent View had a wide range of opinions. Some were very happy with most aspects of the school but a higher proportion than in many other schools expressed concerns. The actions taken to raise expectations about work and behaviour have not all been popular. Some parents have described difficulties in contacting the school or being able to have meetings and discussions about their children's progress. Leaders have not placed a high enough priority on building effective relationships with all parents.
- The school's arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet current requirements. All staff have received relevant child-protection training and checks of potential new staff are thorough.
- The school has gained most external support from a strategic partnership with Fernwood Academy and through membership of the Quadrant C Teaching School Partnership, which the school joined in 2012. School leaders say that the local authority has not offered the school a great deal by way of school improvement support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The effectiveness of the governing body has recently been reviewed. As a consequence it has been reconstituted to reduce the number of governors and to provide a greater focus on improving the school.
  - Members of the governing body are now receiving much more detailed information about the school, including information about the quality of teaching and the progress of students. Their ability to challenge leaders and hold the school to account is getting better but it is too soon to be able to evaluate the impact of this improvement.



- Members of the governing body know how the school spends the pupil premium funding and the current outcomes for eligible students but they have not yet received sufficiently detailed evaluations of the impact of this spending.
- As yet, methods of gathering information and for making judgements about the quality of leadership of the school are new and underdeveloped. Evidence of members of the governing body asking questions are not properly identified in the records of governing body meetings.
- Members of the governing body showed strength and determination during the process to select a new headteacher, refusing to appoint on two occasions because they were not happy with the quality of the applicants.
- The financial management of the school is sound.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122828
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	412734

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1299
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Charlie Grant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Coulton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9131338
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