

New Mills School Business & Enterprise College

Church Lane, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4NR

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate, particularly in science, and has been for some time. Students make inadequate progress owing to poor teaching and leadership in the subject.
- Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals make less progress than other students in the school.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low. They do not plan lessons well enough to take into account students' different abilities. Consequently, the progress of some groups of students is inadequate.
- The quality of marking and assessment is inadequate. Some teachers do not mark work for weeks at a time and many others fail to provide guidance that would help students to improve their work.
- Attitudes to learning are not always good enough, largely as the result of some poor teaching.
- Leaders have been ineffective in addressing the resistance of a small minority of teachers to improve their teaching.
- School leaders do not have good enough systems to identify those groups of students who continue to underachieve.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is inaccurate; school improvement planning is inadequate.
- The funding available to support students who are eligible for free school meals has not been used effectively to raise their achievement.
- Procedures to ensure the safety of students off-site are inadequate.

The school has the following strengths

- Sixth-form students achieve better outcomes than others in the school and are positive role models. Nevertheless, the sixth form requires improvement.
- Governors are starting to offer greater challenge to the school's leaders.
- Attendance remains consistently above the national average and exclusions are very low.
- The school makes a positive contribution to improving students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons; six were jointly observed with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, heads of core subjects, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with students in meetings and informally in lessons.
- An inspector spoke informally with parents as they arrived for a parents' consultation evening.
- Inspectors took into account 93 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of students' work in English and science from Year 9 and Year 11.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, performance management documents, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding records, and the school's current data on students' achievement. In addition, they looked at minutes of governing body meetings and a recent review of the governing body's effectiveness.

Inspection team

Julia Wright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Douglas Folan

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average size secondary school.
- It is a specialist college for business and enterprise and is part of the Peak 11 Learning Federation, which is a group of local secondary schools in Derbyshire that work collaboratively to share good practice and improve standards of teaching and behaviour.
- There has been a reduction in the number of students at the school and this has necessitated a reduction in the number of staff.
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- The large majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- 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 just below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' achievement.
- Alternative part-time placements in Hair and Beauty are provided by Buxton and Leek College for a small number of Year 11 students.
- Hope Valley College provides full-time placements for eight Year 13 students registered at the school.
- When required, the school uses a pupil referral unit run by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to increase the progress students make across many subjects, including in English and mathematics, but most especially in science by:
 - eliminating all inadequate teaching
 - urgently challenging the culture of low expectations that some teachers have, both of what they should be expected to do, and what can be achieved by their students
 - ensuring that all teachers plan lessons that take more account of the needs of students' of different abilities
 - improving assessment practice so that all teachers regularly mark work and ensure that students have clear advice on how to improve their work
 - applying whole-school and consistent approaches to improving students' literacy skills, particularly writing, and making certain that all students follow the advice that teachers provide.
- Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring that the information gathered on students’ progress and performance includes sufficient detail for school leaders, including governors, to analyse trends over time and is used to improve teachers’ planning and to hold them to account for students’ achievement
- urgently reviewing all policies and procedures relating to taking students off-site and ensuring that staff are appropriately trained to assess and minimise risks to students
- establishing a robust performance management system which provides staff with an accurate evaluation of the quality of their teaching based on the progress that students make
- including in the school improvement plan clear markers by which progress can be judged and building in processes for more effective monitoring, so that leaders and governors can properly evaluate the impact of their actions
- reviewing and optimising the use of the pupil premium to raise the achievement of students who are eligible for this funding.

A full external review of governance is not required, but a review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how it should be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement in science is a significant concern; students who gain a GCSE in English and mathematics do not do as well as they should in science. Last year, national test results showed that the standards reached by those students entitled to pupil premium funded support were, on average, one grade below what they should have achieved in this subject.
- Students' attainment on entry to the school is just below the national average. However, the proportion of students gaining five GCSEs graded C or above, including English and mathematics, remains stubbornly below the average compared with all schools nationally. Overall attainment in English and mathematics improved in 2013, but there were some significant groups of students who did not do as well as others.
- The proportion of students making the expected rate of progress in mathematics is improving but this masks the underachievement of some groups of students, particularly those who find learning difficult. The proportion of students making expected progress in English is in line with that of most schools nationally but there is a wide variation between different groups. The most able students make good progress, but other students, including boys, do not make enough progress.
- Students eligible for support through pupil premium funding do not make as much progress as other students. This funding has, on occasion, been used generically to support the needs of all students; for example, to provide careers education and guidance. Students in receipt of the pupil premium who finished Year 11 in 2013, achieved on average one and a half grades less in English and one and a third grades less in mathematics compared to other students.
- The decision to enter the large majority of students early for GCSE mathematics in 2013, has not improved their progress and achievement. This practice has been discontinued.
- Students' reading and writing skills are not sufficiently developed across the school. The quality and presentation of students' writing is particularly poor. Students repeat the same basic grammatical and spelling mistakes and have too few opportunities to write extended pieces in subjects other than English. This leaves them poorly prepared for their next stage in education.
- There are effective and timely systems to identify disabled students and those who have special education needs; appropriate support is provided and, as a result, these students achieve comparatively better than other students in the school.
- Arrangements for alternative provision are effective. Year 13 students who attend Hope Valley College access appropriate programmes tailored to their needs. Tutors at Buxton and Leek College carefully monitor the progress and attendance of the small number of Year 11 students and report back to the school. Three-quarters of the students who attend this placement are planning a career in the hair and beauty industry.
- Students in Year 7 eligible for catch-up funding receive one-to-one tuition to improve their literacy. These arrangements are monitored by the school and are effective. However, there are no formal or recorded arrangements to support those students who require and are entitled to help with mathematics.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement and varies considerably across subjects. Overall, attainment is broadly average with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT) and geography, where it is significantly below average, and drama and music, where it is significantly above average. Some students entering Year 12 with a GCSE in mathematics below grade C are successful in improving their grade. In 2012, a large number of students in Year 12 did not complete the courses that they had started. Achievement in Year 13 is more successful; the majority of students who leave at the end of this year proceed to university. Entry requirements have been tightened to ensure that students no longer begin a study programme for qualifications that are too difficult for them.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Too much teaching requires improvement or is inadequate. Teachers frequently structure lessons on the tasks students should complete without building sufficiently on what they have already learned. Consequently, students make insufficient progress.
- The teaching is not always planned well enough and lessons do not routinely provide the right level of work for all students. Many students are not challenged sufficiently or told what they need to do to improve. High-ability students are allowed to waste time producing posters, complete mundane work from revision guides and fill the gaps left in sentences. Many were left with no real understanding and were provided with no opportunities to consolidate this learning through any other meaningful activities.
- Assessment practice across many subjects is inadequate. While some teachers diligently mark students' work and provide high-quality written and verbal feedback, others do not mark work regularly or at all. Students appear to accept this. Too often marking is cursory, rarely giving advice to students on how to improve. As a result, assessment is not helping students to make better progress.
- The school's literacy policy is rarely applied. However, in some subjects, for example construction, students are taught accurate technical terms that would be used in the industry; they use this vocabulary confidently.
- There are pockets of good, and occasionally outstanding, practice in some subjects. This is particularly the case in art, media and drama. In an art lesson, students demonstrated that they had a detailed understanding of how to improve their response to a range of artists, and were given the confidence to do so. As a result, they made excellent progress.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support students who find learning difficult. These adults have good relationships with students who say that they give them the confidence to succeed. This is reflected in the progress these students make over time.
- No inadequate teaching was observed in the sixth form during the inspection and students are very positive about the additional support that teachers give them outside lesson time. However, teachers do not always plan lessons that meet the needs of all students, depressing progress for some.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because students' attitudes to learning in lessons are not consistently positive, largely as the result of some poor teaching. Conversely, at times behaviour remains acceptable despite the poor quality of teaching.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure at all times is inadequate. Students say that they feel safe. However, during the inspection students who were taken off-site for one activity were inadequately supervised and the risk-assessment was not fit for purpose.
- In general, students are well-prepared and punctual to lessons. They are polite and co-operate well with each other and with adults. On occasions, where teaching is particularly weak, students have low expectations of how they should behave.
- Students have positive views of behaviour. Both older and younger students say that behaviour has improved over the last few years. Sixth-form students speak of a 'sense of community'.
- Teachers regularly use house points to reward good behaviour and punctuality and this is proving to be effective in encouraging pupils to improve their personal development and attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour around the school is orderly and calm. Students socialise well and sixth formers speak of enjoying opportunities to mentor the younger students. They have great pride in their environment; evident in the absence of litter and the beautiful gardens maintained by students.
- Students say bullying is rare and parents agree. They are confident that teachers will support them in their relationships with each other. One Year 7 student said, 'My form tutor will do

anything for me’.

- Students are well-informed about the different types of bullying and opportunities to explore these are embedded in curriculum areas such as personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE) and drama. Drama companies regularly visit the school to explore and challenge students’ thinking about personal relationships. Students are aware that the use of some words can be hurtful and this includes language relating to homophobic bullying.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has improved students’ awareness of issues relating to E-safety. Students can give clear examples of how they can keep themselves safe online.
- Attendance is good and the systems to maintain this are effective for the large majority of students. Attendance remains above national averages overall and for most groups of students, with the exception of those students eligible for pupil premium funding. This has contributed to the underachievement of these students.
- Exclusions remain very low. This is, in part, owing to the school’s effective use of internal systems for removing students who disrupt learning, but it is also because of the early support that is identified for students who are at risk of exclusion.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The headteacher has adopted an encouraging and supportive approach to staff development. Some staff have responded well; others have been more resistant to change. Consequently, leaders’ actions to improve the quality of teaching have not been effective enough.
- Leadership in science has been inadequate for a number of years. School leaders and governors now recognise this and have started to take action but this has been insufficient to redress the situation.
- The performance management of teachers lacks rigour. School leaders’ actions to evaluate the quality of teaching and help staff to improve have been ineffective. The positive feedback provided to teachers does not always match or take sufficient account of the impact that their teaching is having on students’ progress and achievement. In addition, the data systems used by the school are unreliable because they are not supported by accurate teacher assessment. A large majority of the staff remain on the upper pay scale; some are also in receipt of additional leadership allowances for teaching, despite failing to meet the teacher standards. Some subject leaders are not models of good practice.
- School improvement planning is ineffective. Leaders do not measure improvement against real targets nor are there sufficient milestones built into the plan to help leaders monitor the progress that is being made. The quality of these documents show that school leaders are insufficiently strategic; they do not have the capacity to bring about rapid improvement in the school.
- The leadership of behaviour, improving attendance and making provision for students who are disabled or have special educational needs is highly effective. The impact of this work can be clearly seen in the improvements made in all of these areas.
- The range of subjects taught offers breadth and balance, despite financial constraints. Leaders are planning to increase the number of lessons in English and mathematics next year to further improve achievement in these subjects. Subjects available to study at post-16 are limited by staffing reductions. However, students may access a range of vocational courses through local post-16 providers.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance is improving, particularly at post-16. There are systems to advise students on appropriate routes taking into consideration their starting points and career aspirations. Despite this, very few students eligible for pupil premium funding choose to follow an academic route at GCSE, even though they have the ability to do so.
- There is a variety of extra-curricular opportunities available in sports, performing arts and gardening. The school does not collate records of attendance and so cannot analyse trends or

take-up rates. However, some students have made exceptional progress as a result of this provision, for example, one student was named as the Royal Horticultural Society Young Gardener of the Year.

- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. Entry requirements have been reviewed and this is starting to have an impact on the number of students who complete their courses. However, leaders have not taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching. Progress over time remains poor in some subjects.
- The local authority identified the school as a priority in September 2013. Since then it has provided regular support to improve the function of governance and continued to provide consultants to advise teachers in science and mathematics. This support has yet to demonstrate impact on the outcomes for all students.
- Members of the leadership team share responsibilities as well as undertaking a significant teaching load. This, along with the recent secondment of an assistant headteacher to the local authority, has dramatically reduced leaders' capacity to improve the quality of teaching.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. There are activities in the Personal, Social, Health and Religious Education Programme that provide students with opportunities to reflect on their moral and spiritual development. Vertical tutor groups encourage a harmonious community.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and a very large majority would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body took up their posts in October 2013. Since then other new governors have been appointed and this has added to their range of skills and expertise.
- Governors have previously spent insufficient time discussing students' achievement and teaching quality. A review of governance has recently taken place with the support of the local authority which has helped to keep governors better informed about their roles and responsibilities and to improve their knowledge and understanding. They now have a clearer view of their responsibility to challenge the school's leaders and to hold them more rigorously to account for the quality of teaching and performance management systems.
- Last year pupil premium funding was spent on initiatives such as an accelerated reading programme, careers advice and additional one-to one-support. This has not had an impact on achievement for all eligible students. A governor now has responsibility for monitoring expenditure of the pupil premium funding.
- A financial deficit is forecast and is set to increase over the coming years. Governors are aware that this is a priority and are working with the local authority to address this.

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	112936
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	440416

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	574
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maggie Cole
Headteacher	Jesse Elms
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2011
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