

Thomas Alleyne's High School

Dove Bank, Uttoxeter, ST14 8DU

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2014

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

- Over the last few years, the numbers of students attaining five A* to C grade GCSE passes including English and mathematics has varied too much, and, in 2013, English results fell significantly.
- Some students who are given extra support through pupil premium funding do not attend regularly enough to make good progress.
- Not all teachers mark students' written work well. Some students are not being given helpful advice about what to do to improve their attitudes to learning or the standard of their work.
- Teachers do not display consistently high expectations for what students in Years 9, 10 and 11 are capable of achieving.
- Senior leaders are not having sufficient impact on improving teaching and achievement. They do not analyse the information they collect well, so do not intervene quickly when things are not working.
- Senior and subject leaders do not monitor information on students' attainment and progress in detail to ensure that it is accurate.

The school has the following strengths

- Very good relationships characterise the school. Students show respect for each other and for their teachers, and feel safe.
- The sixth form is good. Good teaching leads to students making good progress.
- Achievement is good in mathematics and for higher ability students, and is improving for disabled students and those who have special educational needs because of the good support provided.
- The curriculum for all year groups, including the sixth form, is good.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well in lessons and through additional activities.
- Good governance is providing the stability and continuity that the school currently needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 lessons or part lessons. There were five joint observations with members of the senior leadership team and 43 teachers were observed in total.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, house leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with those responsible for attendance and exclusion data, safeguarding and child protection and the inclusion facility at Dove House.
- Meetings also took place with a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of each of the governors' committees, and a local authority representative who has recently become the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors listened to the views of students from all year groups through specially arranged meetings and through conversations during lessons.
- Inspectors looked at students' work in a wide range of subjects.
- The views of the 78 parents who completed the online survey (Parent View) were taken into account, as were letters from parents. The views of staff who completed the questionnaire were also taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at information about students' progress and attainment and the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing. They also looked at the system for managing teachers' performance and staff training details. The minutes of governing body meetings were looked at, as was a report from the local authority and a range of policy documents.

Inspection team

Liz Talmadge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Hiscox	Additional Inspector
Susan Thomas	Additional Inspector
Lynn Cox	Additional Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thomas Alleyne's High School is larger than average. As the only secondary school in the area, it takes students into Year 9 from a very large geographical area.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was in a transition period between one headteacher who left the school in December 2013 and another due to take up her post in April 2014. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher who was the deputy headteacher in charge of the sixth form. Other members of the senior leadership team have also taken on additional or new temporary responsibilities for this interim period.
- The vast majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding made available by the government to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or with a parent serving in the armed forces) is much lower than average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also lower than average.
- A small number of students in Year 11 attend the Burton Learning Centre Pupil Referral Unit on a full-time basis. A group of Year 10 and 11 students attend work-based courses at Burton and South Derbyshire College.
- 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 the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - students' books are marked regularly and areas for improvement are clearly identified in the feedback given by teachers
 - students are consistently expected to show positive attitudes that will actively support their good and rapid progress.
- Improve achievement, especially in English, by:
 - identifying any students who are making slow progress and giving them additional support
 - ensuring better attendance for the group of students who miss too much time at school and so fail to make the progress that they should.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders routinely analyse the information they collect about students' progress, so that they can act swiftly to prevent underachievement
 - subject and senior leaders closely monitor the assessments made by teachers to make sure they are reliable.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium 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

- There has been significant variation in GCSE results over the last four years, with 2013 results being much lower than those in 2012. Because results in English fell to average, fewer students achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Some subjects are doing better than others and some groups of students are doing better than others.
- Year 11 results in 2013 were much better in mathematics than in English. The proportion of students who made the progress expected nationally in English was below average, while in mathematics it was above average. The proportion who exceeded expected progress was just below average in English but average in mathematics.
- The students who make the slowest progress in English are middle-ability students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. While the school is now taking determined steps to address the needs of these students, the pace of change has been too slow to have had sufficient impact at the present time.
- The small group of students supported by the pupil premium are not achieving well because, until recently, their progress has not been monitored frequently enough to provide support quickly. In 2013, those in Year 11 were approximately a GCSE grade behind their classmates in English and mathematics. The gap has closed slightly this year and they are currently about two thirds of a grade behind.
- GCSE results for 2013 were good in art and design, graphics, drama, English literature, child development and religious studies. Large numbers of students are entered for the separate sciences of biology, chemistry and physics, and high proportions attain A* to C grades in these subjects.
- Higher-ability students do particularly well in a range of subjects, including mathematics, religious education, drama, art and graphics. They do as well as other students nationally in history and geography. The school enters students early for examinations in mathematics but this has not disadvantaged any student.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is improving. Students supported at school action and school action plus show good progress in English, and broadly average progress in mathematics. Students who have a statement of special educational needs are making better progress in mathematics.
- Current school data indicate that the proportion of students set to make expected progress is increasing this year, as is the proportion set to exceed expected progress.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. The vast majority of students are completing both AS and A2 courses and are achieving qualifications in all subjects. Students achieve particularly well in applied art and design, photography, English Language, English Literature and performance studies.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that all groups of students, particularly those supported

by the pupil premium in Years 9, 10 and 11, make consistently good or better progress.

- Marking and feedback to students are not consistently well used by teachers in all subjects. In some cases, they help students to recognise their successes and to reflect on what their next steps in learning should be. Too frequently, however, marking is superficial and does not give students suggestions as to how they could improve their work, in line with school policy. Where students' books are not marked regularly, the standard of their presentation and of the content of their work deteriorate.
- Teachers do not always demonstrate high enough expectations of students. Relationships between teachers and students are generally very good and students show respect towards each other and listen to each other's opinions. However, this is not enough to ensure that all students make good and better progress. Students do not always understand how to develop their good general behaviour into consistently positive attitudes to learning so that the work they do in groups, in class or when working on their own has a good impact on the progress that they make.
- In lessons where teaching promotes effective learning, including the sixth form, good subject knowledge and a good understanding of examination requirements enable teachers to challenge students to extend their knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. Students are encouraged to engage in mature and reflective dialogue about sensitive and challenging issues, as seen in a debate in a Year 11 religious education class on the effectiveness of prison as a deterrent. Teachers ask well-chosen questions to challenge all students and to stretch the most-able students effectively. Literacy skills are taught well.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. Their progress is carefully monitored and they are now making good progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students are confident and are often encouraged to work on their own, developing good personal study skills with teachers on hand to support when needed. A good example of this was seen in an A2 English Language lesson, where individuals contributed to their own and each other's understanding of a topic.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because, despite their courteous and well-mannered behaviour around the school and in lessons, students are not always actively engaged in their learning. This gets in the way of them making good and rapid progress.
- The school has been effective in improving attendance and has significantly reduced the persistent absence of the small number of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Attendance is above average overall, but some students who are eligible for the pupil premium are still too often absent. This means that they cannot make the progress expected of them.
- Despite students' generally good behaviour, they do not routinely take care of the school buildings, and there is often litter on the ground and chewing gum under desks and on carpets.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students report that they feel safe, their parents agree and the evidence from the inspection supports these views.
- The school has a strong 'house' system that supports the welfare of students effectively. In

such a big school, students are known individually within their house and have opportunities to taken on positions of responsibility and to develop leadership skills.

- The school excludes very few students, and provides alternative opportunities for the small number of students who find the routines of school life difficult to manage. The Burton Pupil Referral Unit is used to support very small numbers of students, and Burton and South Derbyshire College support a further small group of students by offering them work-related opportunities on a part-time basis.
- Students who need extra pastoral support attend Dove House, an inclusive school-based facility that is an alternative to exclusion. This offers high-quality support to vulnerable students.
- The sixth form caters for a wide range of students. This ensures that the vast majority go on to employment, further or higher education at the end of their time in the sixth form.
- Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education can be seen in many areas of school life. There are numerous clubs and activities available for students, both during and after school. There are trips and visits, many sporting music and drama opportunities and some exceptional experiences in subjects such as art and design, religious studies and humanities.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The acting headteacher and his team are providing the school with firm leadership during a period of transition. However, not enough has been done over time to iron out inconsistencies in achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour.
- Senior leaders collect a wide range of evidence about students' attainment and progress but do not analyse it effectively or match it to other information to identify patterns of underachievement. This means that they cannot take decisive actions early enough to have an impact on outcomes for particular groups of students.
- Senior leaders have introduced a good tracking system to help set targets for students and monitor their progress. However, they have not ensured that subject leaders check the accuracy of teachers' assessments so that the information on the tracking system is consistently reliable across all subjects and year groups.
- The quality of teaching is monitored regularly by senior and subject leaders. Joint observations conducted with inspectors confirmed that their judgements are accurate and that they have a good view of teaching over time. However, they have not ensured that the school policy on marking is being implemented by all teachers, or that feedback always helps students to make better progress.
- School leaders have created an environment where relationships between teachers and students, and between students, are very good. This is a notable strength of the school.
- The curriculum for all year groups is good. Students are able to follow a wide range of courses that are well suited to their interests. The sixth form curriculum offers a good mix of academic and work-related qualifications.
- The school provides good-quality information and guidance to students so that they are clear about opportunities for life after school at both 16 and 18.

- The school generally provides good training for teachers and uses good systems to manage their performance. There are clear links between teachers' performance and decisions about their pay rises and promotion.

- The local authority has historically seen Thomas Alleyne's High School as a good school and has therefore given it very little support in recent years.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are a skilled and highly organised group who are currently providing the stability that the school requires during this period of transition. They are well aware of the need to improve achievement, the quality of teaching and aspects of behaviour, and have a clear long-term view of what the school is aiming for.
 - Governors are aware that pupil premium funding is being used appropriately to address the persistent absence of some students so that they are in lessons on a regular basis. They are aware that it is beginning to have an impact but has not yet improved achievement enough.
 - Governors ensure that teachers only receive pay awards if they have met their performance targets. They have managed the appointment process for a new headteacher and are currently taking a lead on resolving staffing issues.
 - Governors are proud of the school, know it well and provide appropriate support and challenge to senior leaders, regularly expecting them to account for students' achievement.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding meets national requirements.

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	124430
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	440613

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	Maintained
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	1170
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Trenergy
Acting Headteacher	Carl Gliddon
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2011
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