

William Allitt School

Sunnyside, Newhall, Swadlincote, DE11 0TL

Inspection dates 8–9 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures

- Students' achievement, particularly that of boys, is inadequate in several subjects including English and mathematics.
- Early entry in mathematics has not raised the standards of more-able students sufficiently. Too few of the most-able students achieve the top grades in any examination.
- The gap between the attainment of students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers is too wide in both English and mathematics.
- Students whose first language is not English, disabled students and those with special educational needs who are not catered for by the school's enhanced provision, do not make enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations of their students are too low and, consequently, students make too little progress.
- Teachers do not check students' understanding of their learning regularly enough or adapt their teaching to reflect students' progress. Teachers do not correct students' spelling, punctuation or grammar sufficiently.
- Teachers' do not consistently use their marking to give students guidance on how to improve or check that students act on this advice.
- Behaviour requires improvement because some students lose concentration in lessons, leading to low-level disruption.
- Actions by leaders to improve teaching and students' achievement across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, have not been taken quickly enough.
- Leaders' evaluations of their effectiveness are sometimes over-generous and the impact of the measures that have been introduced is not systematically checked.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively, ensuring students feel safe and valued.
- A wide range of courses is provided for students at Key Stage 4. This motivates students to attend school regularly.
- The school's course for Year 7 is taught well and greatly enjoyed by the students, resulting in good progress in this part of their work.
- Students' achievement in the arts is good.
- Leaders have begun to use data more effectively to evaluate progress and target support to where it is needed most.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 teachers teach and visited 40 part-lessons, of which three were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, and school staff, including senior, subject and other leaders. A meeting was also held with the local authority's school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's progress tracking data, planning and monitoring documentation and self-evaluation. Safeguarding policies and behaviour and attendance records were also examined.
- Inspectors also took account of the 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the 55 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Johnson	Additional Inspector
Charlotte Evers	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	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 an average-sized secondary school with slightly more girls than boys. It is a specialist arts college with an additional specialism in science.
- Most students are White British. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well below those found nationally.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is broadly average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above average.
- The school contains specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs for nine students with physical disability. These students are taught, with appropriate support, within mainstream classes.
- Currently, 20 Key Stage 4 students attend part-time alternative education at the local Burton and South Derbyshire College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for students' attainment and progress.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2013; a new, substantive headteacher has been appointed from the end of April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, in order to accelerate progress and raise standards across the school, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what all students, and particularly the most able, can achieve
 - teachers check regularly on students' progress and adapt their teaching as necessary to ensure that all students are challenged appropriately by the work they are set
 - marking and feedback are consistently helpful in moving students up to the next level of attainment
 - teachers check that students have acted on the guidance they are given through marking
 - all low-level disruptive behaviour is eliminated from lessons
 - teachers across all subjects develop students' literacy skills by regularly correcting any spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.
- Improve achievement in English and mathematics, particularly that of boys, students supported

by the pupil premium and the most-able students, by:

- providing more challenging work in all subjects for the most-able students
- identifying early any students whose reading is weak and providing more frequent and effective support so that they catch up with their peers
- checking students' progress in writing more frequently, and providing more opportunities for students to develop their skills by writing at length in other subjects
- giving greater attention in mathematics to the development of students' key skills in calculation and problem solving
- ensuring that disabled students and those who have special educational needs, who are not covered by the enhanced provision offered by the school, make the same good progress as those who are.

■ Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by:

- making leaders', including subject leaders', evaluations of the school's and their own effectiveness more rigorous
- reviewing the use of early entry for GCSE
- providing better support for students whose main language is not English
- raising expectations by making all students' targets more challenging throughout the school
- ensuring that subject leaders' plans give greater emphasis to improving the progress made by different groups of students
- ensuring that leaders check more frequently on the impact of the measures being taken to bring about improvement.

An external review of governance has taken place fairly recently, therefore a full external review of governance is not required. However, a review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Standards by the end of Year 11 have declined significantly since the previous inspection. In 2013, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was below the national average, and lower than it was in 2012.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in English and mathematics is also below the national average; it was well below in English. In relation to students' broadly average starting points in Year 7, this indicates inadequate achievement.
- Students underperform in a wide range of subjects, such as history, languages, science and technology. Although the school's current data show that boys have made better progress in many subjects this year, their achievement still trails far behind that of girls, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Information on students' current progress indicates that students are now making reasonable progress across all year groups in a wide range of subjects. However, the rate of progress is not fast enough to make up for previous underachievement.
- The most-able students do not make the progress they should in a wide range of subjects because teaching does not challenge them sufficiently. As a result, a far smaller proportion of these students than seen nationally gain the top grades in GCSE examinations.
- The attainment gap between students supported by the pupil premium and their peers widened in 2013. It was equivalent, on average, to one GCSE grade lower in English and one-and-a-half GCSE grades below their peers in mathematics. Although there are strong indications that the attainment gap is beginning to close this year, it remains too wide across the school as a whole.
- The rate of progress of the very few students who speak English as an additional language is not fast enough. Hence, the school does not successfully promote equality of opportunity.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs varies across the school. Some students make good progress given their starting points; in particular, those supported by the school's special provision who have a physical disability. These students also learn well how to cope with the challenges they face. This is the result of good quality support and resources to aid their learning. However, other students with special educational needs, particularly in Key Stage 3, make weaker progress because teaching is not sufficiently well adapted to meet their needs.
- The school entered many students early for examinations in English last year. Although a high proportion passed, too many did not achieve the higher A*/A grades, resulting in underachievement. Early entry in mathematics has helped some students to achieve well in this subject as indicated by the fact that these students achieved or exceeded their target grade. However, this policy has not been helpful to the most-able students as too many have not been achieving the top grades.
- Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to improve students' reading and writing skills and, as a consequence, literacy levels show signs of improvement. However, there is lack of a consistent approach to the development of students' literacy skills in all subjects, resulting in variation in the attention teachers give to correcting students' spelling, punctuation and grammatical

mistakes.

- Students' achievement varies in the two specialist subjects of performing arts and science. Performing arts is a strength of the school and students achieve well. Achievement in science was inadequate in 2013 but standards are now rising and a higher proportion of students are making reasonable progress.
- The few students in Key Stage 4 who attend work-related courses at the local college achieve well. They enjoy their placements and acquire the skills they need.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate over time because it has not been successful in combating student underachievement across a wide range of subjects. Too much teaching is characterised by low expectations and a failure to check students' progress regularly or stimulate deeper thinking. As a result, some students, particularly boys, do not try hard enough and too quickly lose concentration in these lessons.
- Teaching does not always challenge all students sufficiently. As a result, some students, particularly the most able, are held back and do not make enough progress. Staff have not adapted their teaching sufficiently to close the gap between the performance of students supported by the pupil premium and their peers. Consequently, this group of students has underachieved over a sustained period.
- In general, teachers mark students' work regularly and there is some good marking in English and mathematics. However, weak marking in some subjects results in students not knowing precisely what actions they need to take to move up to the next level of attainment. Sometimes misconceptions are not addressed by teachers and students are not always given the feedback they need to improve their subject-specific skills; for example, in science. Teachers do not check sufficiently that students are learning from their mistakes and acting on the guidance they have been given.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well in some lessons, particularly to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through the school's enhanced provision. However, not all disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive the same high-quality support and teaching is not consistently well planned to meet their needs.
- The teaching of literacy skills is variable across subjects. For example, literacy is promoted well in humanities but less so in science. Activities set in English are increasingly effective because they are designed to develop students' reading and writing skills early on, and standards in this key subject are therefore rising. However, as leaders acknowledge, much work remains to be done to embed literacy skills across all subjects.
- Aspects of teaching are good, and pockets of teaching in some subjects show steady improvement, including in English and mathematics. For example, the school's own planned course for Year 7 is taught effectively and students spoke excitedly to inspectors about how much they enjoy their learning. However, the improvements seen in some aspects of teaching are not yet evident in all subjects and year groups, and it is too early to see evidence of a sustained and positive impact on learning from the improvements that have recently been put in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Around one-fifth of parents who responded to the online questionnaire expressed concern about students' behaviour in the school. A few members of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire also expressed concerns about the management of behaviour.
- Inspectors saw students being generally well behaved in lessons and ready to learn. However, when low-level disruption is not dealt with effectively or when teaching fails to hold their interest, students' levels of concentration drop and they do not make the progress they should.
- Although, in the main, students are punctual to lessons, a few lack the self-discipline required to settle down quickly and get ready for learning.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has fallen this year as a result of the effective implementation of the school's behaviour policy. The number of recorded behaviour incidents of different levels of seriousness has also been reduced since the previous inspection.
- Attendance is above average as a result of the determined and successful efforts the school has made to work with families to improve it. There are no groups in the school, including students supported by the pupil premium and those with additional needs, whose attendance is now a cause for concern.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students who met with inspectors said that adults care for them well and that they feel safe in the school's welcoming and supportive environment. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that the school helps to keep their children safe.
- Students are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying. They say there is little bullying in school and there are no areas where they feel unsafe. A few students expressed the desire for the school to do more to discourage language that shows disrespect for same-sex relationships.
- The additional counselling and mentoring opportunities provided by the school are appreciated by students and give further support to their perception that the school is a caring place. Year 7 students spoke appreciatively of the valuable support provided by Year 11 students. Older students say they receive good advice about the next stage in their education.
- School records show that the small numbers of students who are educated for part of the time on a different site are well looked-after and kept safe.

The leadership and management is inadequate

- School leaders have not acted in a timely or effective manner to combat the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders' evaluations of their effectiveness are overgenerous. As a consequence, standards declined further in 2013 to well below the national average.
- Although the school's current data shows improvement across a range of subjects, achievement

in relation to students' average starting points is still not strong enough. Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to improve the school quickly across all areas of its work.

- The proportion of students making good progress, although improving, remains too low to make up for lost ground. This is partly the result of the school setting targets for improvement that have not been challenging enough, particularly for the most-able students, and which do not take enough account of individual students' different starting points.
- Leaders' monitoring has not given sufficient attention to the progress of identifiable groups. This has resulted in the school not identifying underperformance by particular groups as quickly as it should, thereby slowing down the pace of improvement.
- Systems to manage teachers' performance have been improved recently and only good or better teaching is now rewarded with progression up the pay scale. However, targets in the past have been insufficiently challenging, resulting in slowing down the rate of students' progress.
- The school's programme to improve the quality of teaching has not yet led to substantial improvements in teaching across all subjects or significantly improved the achievement of all groups of students.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- In English and mathematics, there are early signs of improvement as a result of better line-management structures, clear action plans and tighter targets that are working well in moving these departments forward.
- Subject leaders are becoming more adept in using achievement data to identify underachievement at the early stages. Their quality assurance files show evidence of the positive impact of this approach. Sometimes, however, subject leaders' analyses of their departments' performance do not identify weaknesses in achievement or teaching accurately. As a result, their plans for improvement are not always sharp enough.
- The use of the pupil premium has not been effective over time. Gaps between the attainment of eligible pupils and others have remained too wide. This funding is, however, being used in a more targeted way this year to improve outcomes for those who are eligible; for example, focused one-to-one tutoring and intensive work with small groups to boost literacy skills and standards in English.
- The choice of subjects offered to students is appropriately broad, and suitable alternatives are offered to those students who wish to follow alternative provisions; for example, in hairdressing and construction. Students have a sound awareness of the skills required to access employment opportunities in their local area.
- Across many areas of learning, students have the chance to reflect on and voice their opinions about complex ethical and moral issues such as racism and abortion. This, coupled with good provision for a wide range of sporting and opportunities in the arts, makes a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has brokered useful support for the school; in particular, to address leadership capacity issues in the English and technology departments. There are early indications of the positive impact of this work. However, the local authority has not been able to arrest the decline in achievement in time nor ensured that speedy action has been taken to improve

teaching or achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- An external review of governance was recommended in the previous inspection report. The local authority carried out the review and many positive features of governance were highlighted. The key recommendations made have been taken very seriously by the governing body, the majority of whose members were not in post at the time of the previous inspection. The governors' action plan is detailed and sharp, and has helped to improve the effectiveness of governance. Governors are linked to departments and they check up on the quality of teaching. However, they have failed to challenge the school quickly enough to arrest the decline seen since the previous inspection.
- Governors' understanding of how to use data on students' achievement to challenge school leaders more robustly has improved and is contributing to the school now showing early indications of reversing this decline. Governors have a good knowledge of how the funds for students eligible for support through the pupil premium have been spent and, although it is too soon to know the full impact of measures being taken, they are beginning to make sure that these students are less likely to fall behind the others. Governors are beginning to receive reports on the management of teachers' performance, which informs decisions as to whether or not they progress up the pay scale. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements are in place and that statutory requirements are met.

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	112938
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	431598

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	990
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Mead
Headteacher	Mike McCandless
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2012
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