

# Chaucer School

Wordsworth Avenue, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S5 8NH

**Inspection dates** 24–25 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b> <b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students make expected progress, rather than good progress, throughout the school.
- While leadership and teaching in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 3, is improving, Year 11 students' progress is slower than expected due to a legacy of weaker teaching.
- The quality of teaching, although improving, does not support good progress, because it is too variable.
- Work is sometimes too hard for some students, and often too easy for the most able students, because it is not always planned sufficiently carefully, using data about the levels at which the students are working.
- Marking does not always promote students' good progress because it is inconsistent in telling them what they have done well, what to do next and in teachers' checking that their advice has been taken.
- Some teachers' expectations of the presentation and neatness of students' work are not always high enough.
- Students do not all attend school regularly enough to help them to make good progress. Some do not understand the importance of good attendance in helping them to make good progress.
- Students' attitudes to learning are variable when teaching is not good. Some teachers' expectations are not always high enough and although most use the behaviour policy promptly to ensure that all students always behave well in lessons, a few do not.
- Not all leaders check sufficiently thoroughly, the quality of teaching and students' work to ensure that they have a fully accurate picture of their learning and achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is led strongly by the headteacher and he is supported very well by the executive headteacher and the governing body.
- Students studying vocational subjects achieve well.
- The students feel safe in school and they respect and show pride in their environment.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 36 lessons, of which six were observed jointly with the headteacher or with individual members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors talked with many students during the two days and spoke formally with four groups of students. They observed the students at break and lunch times and attended several registration periods. Inspectors observed students being given additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, governors, and members of the school's strategic board.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including information about the achievement of the different groups of students represented in the school. They checked the school's improvement plan and its links to the quality of teaching and staff's performance management targets. They looked at examples of the students' work and checked records of their behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and policies to help keep them safe.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspectors considered the 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 39 responses given by staff to the questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Eleanor Garbutt	Additional Inspector
Neil Dyment	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than others of its type. It became an academy in September 2012. It is part of the Tapton School Academy Trust, which consists of two secondary schools and three primary schools. Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students entitled to support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children and students known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Alternative places for the education of twelve students in both Years 10 and 11, is used by the school in agreement with the local authority, to support their learning and readiness for employment and training.
- Since becoming an academy, the school's leadership structure has been reorganised.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is at least consistently good or better, so that progress quickens and standards rise, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 4, by ensuring that:
  - marking is regular, tells students specifically what they have done well and what they need to do next, and teachers give students the time to respond to their advice
  - teachers use carefully the information that they have about the levels at which the students work, to ensure that all students, especially the most able, are given work that is at the right level for them to achieve at least well
  - teachers' expectations of students' handwriting, presentation and layout are consistently high across the school.
- Improve students' engagement in their learning by ensuring that:
  - teachers' expectations of students' attitudes to learning and behaviour are consistently high
  - all staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently.
- Improve students' attendance by making sure that:
  - all students understand the impact on their learning and progress of irregular attendance and the value that employers place on good attendance records
  - finding more ways of encouraging some students to attend more frequently.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in raising students' achievement by making sure that:
  - all leaders' checks on teaching and students' work are regular and comprehensive so that the school has a fully accurate picture of teaching and learning
  - leaders check that all teachers are using information about students' progress when they plan teaching and learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although achievement is improving, especially in Key Stage 3, it needs to be better throughout the school and particularly in Key Stage 4. In Year 11, while current information shows that there has been some improvement, for example students in English are now making expected progress, a lower proportion of students in mathematics are doing so.
- The proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE level, including in English and mathematics is on track to rise slightly this year. This indicates students' overall are making expected progress from their well below average starting points on entry into the school.
- Most groups of students make expected progress throughout the school, including students with disabilities and with special educational needs. Not enough students, however, are making better than expected or good progress because the work set for them is not always sufficiently challenging. Similarly, the most able students are not always provided with tasks that enable them to develop the skills they need to achieve the higher levels. However, inspection evidence, including the school's current and accurate data about student's achievement indicates that standards are likely to improve this academic year.
- The school's data point to students making expected progress in many GCSE subjects this year. Students studying vocational subjects make good progress because teaching is consistently good and students see the point of learning.
- The data for Year 10 students, and evidence from lesson observations and samples of work, show that standards and progress of different groups of students, including those supported by the pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs, are improving substantially, especially in mathematics, which is set to be in line with the rates of progress in English. This is both because of careful use of the funding and improving teaching.
- Progress is quickest in Year 7 where the school's ethos and expectations have been firmly established and the culture of the school has changed to one where increasingly, students strive to do their very best. Many students are achieving levels close to or at the expected levels for their age.
- The students supported by the pupil premium funding receive additional support, especially in literacy and numeracy and also for some to improve their attendance and behaviour. Last year, the attainment of those students known to be eligible for free school meals was one third of a GCSE grade behind in English and half a grade behind that of other students in the school in mathematics. The school's current data shows that the rate of progress for both those students supported by the pupil premium and those not, has increased this year, though slightly faster for those not given the support.
- Students who do not achieve the expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of their primary school education, are given carefully planned support in Year 7, through the catch-up funding. Most Year 7 students who receive support have made good progress in catching up because support is used well.
- Almost all students in Year 11 sat their GCSE mathematics examination at the end of Year 10 and attained below average standards. Standards currently in Year 11 mathematics have improved and in Year 10 and in the lower year groups, school data indicates that standards are on track to be in line with the national average by the end of Year 11.
- Students educated off-site make good progress in their social skills and self-esteem. Their attendance has improved and as a consequence, their progress is accelerating.
- Most students either go into sixth form education, further education, or employment. The school's tracking of the students' destinations is thorough and matches the help they give to Year 11 students in considering the best options for their future.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching is improving, but it is not yet consistently good enough to lead to students' good progress over time, including in English and mathematics.
- There is variability in the quality of teaching. Work is not always sufficiently carefully planned, because some teachers do not use the knowledge that they have about the levels at which the students work when setting tasks. As a result, work is sometimes too hard for some students, and more often, too easy for the most able students; consequently their progress slows. Work is now being planned more carefully in mathematics to match the needs of students of all abilities, than in any other subject, demonstrating the improving teaching and leadership in mathematics.
- Marking of the students' work is inconsistent in its regularity and detail. Although it often tells students what they have achieved, it does not often tell them exactly what they need to do next to make further progress. There is little evidence that advice given by the teachers is taken by the students.
- Teachers' expectations of how the students present their work are also inconsistent. Thus, throughout the school, standards of writing and the care that the students take in their work are very variable.
- There are positive relationships between most staff and students, which set the scene well for good learning. Students enjoy finding out information for themselves and in groups and in discussing their findings with other students.
- Where students learn well they are very clear about what they are expected to know, understand and be able to do, as well as how to present their work; consequently they demonstrate pride and creativity in their learning. The tasks that they are given enable students of all abilities to make quick progress. Teachers' careful questioning encourages the students to think more carefully about their answers. This was the case in a geography lesson. It enhanced the challenge to the students, who enjoyed the interesting activities they were carrying out about the characteristics of life in the developing world.
- There is some developing good practice in providing opportunities for students to practise their literacy, including reading and numeracy skills in other subjects. This is an ongoing priority for the school in its acknowledgement of the need to further raise standards in literacy and numeracy.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Although many students show good attitudes to learning and try hard to make progress in lessons, others do not concentrate enough and produce too little work.
- Over time, however, students' attitudes to learning have improved, helped by good behaviour systems and rewards and punishments. Several students said that behaviour this year is the best it has been since the school became an academy. However, there is some inconsistency in teachers' expectations of students' behaviour and also in the application of the behaviour policy, resulting in the students' variable attitudes and the quality of their work.
- Attendance is improving, particularly in Year 7, where yearly attendance is the highest recorded by the school. The governors and parents work together to support the school's good methods of raising attendance but rates of attendance are not good enough in Key Stage 4 to ensure students' good progress. Not all students realise the value that employers place on good attendance. Punctuality has improved considerably in the two years that the school has been open.
- Around the large site, and in corridors and in the dining areas, students' behaviour is orderly. The environment welcomes and values the students and they respect it. For example, there is no litter. Photographs and inspiring quotations from famous people are prominent. Students' art work adorns the walls and reminds them of their learning and achievements.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. They feel safe. Bullying does occur, although not often, according to most students and is dealt with quickly.
- Students are offered a range of responsibilities, including being anti-bullying champions. They are the first port of call when students have concerns about bullying. The students show a good understanding of how to respond to, for example, cyber-bullying.
- The students value the other responsibilities they are offered, such as preparing Year 6 pupils for secondary school and being student leaders in subject areas. The school council not only makes a difference, but empowers the students to develop their personal and inter-personal skills.
- The students like their school. They say it is a tolerant school and students understand the importance of respecting those of other cultures and beliefs. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted appropriately.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Although the school leadership team has an accurate understanding overall of the needs of the school and is addressing priorities methodically, teaching, standards and progress need to improve. Leaders' checking of students' work is not always sufficiently thorough to ensure that the school has a fully accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's evident improvement is led strongly by the headteacher and supported very well by the executive headteacher and the governors and senior leaders. Subject leaders are developing their roles and influence at an increasing pace and adding to the school's ability to keep improving. The leaders enjoy good working relationships with each other, which is an added benefit in moving the school forward quickly. As with the rest of the staff, they are committed to making sure the school continues to improve.
- The basis for the school's improvement has been the good systems that have been established to improve achievement. In particular, information about students' progress is detailed, accurate and used weekly in meetings with leaders to discuss progress. The quickening pace of progress through the school from Year 7 onwards and the improvements in, for example, mathematics teaching and leadership, are testimony to their effectiveness. Systems to check behaviour and attendance are also bringing about improvements and a change in the culture of the school. The curriculum is being adapted to better meet the students' needs.
- Although leaders have gathered detailed information about students' achievement they have not until recently, sufficiently pinpointed those changes required to ensure students' rapid improvement in their overall attainment and progress from detailed scrutiny of the work students produce. In addition, it is only recently that leaders have more carefully checked that teachers use data about students' achievement to plan and set work that enables students to make consistently good progress. This means that despite much improvement this year there has been some underachievement over time.
- The school's priority is to continue to improve the quality of teaching and thus students' performance. Senior and subject leaders observe teaching regularly and support and training are provided where teaching is less than good. Leaders' judgements of teaching during the inspection were wholly accurate.
- Staff's performance management targets are helping to improve teaching because they are very appropriate, measureable and challenging. The large majority of staff feel that it is helping them to improve their teaching.
- A broad programme of learning ensures the students have the opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge. At Key Stage 4, the students have a choice of courses that reflect their career goals and interests, as well as a programme which covers personal and social education. They enjoy after-school clubs, such as sporting activities, sewing, cooking and science.
- While the school promotes equality of opportunity, not all students are as successful as they



could be because the work some are given is sometimes too hard or too easy.

- The careers information and guidance programme is developing. Students are well informed about option choices in Year 9 and develop a range of skills in preparing for work experience placements. They have opportunities to participate in enterprise and business schemes. The school uses its links well to enable students to sample different skills and careers options.
- The partnership with the Tipton School Academy Trust provides support for teachers and leaders in strengthening their effectiveness. Chaucer School works closely with the three primary schools in the trust to, for example, prepare Year 6 students for secondary school.
- The school values the good relationships it has built with parents and encourages them to communicate with staff regularly. The termly parent partnership meetings, which are well attended, encourage their involvement. The school's understanding of the impact of irregular attendance has resulted in an attendance workshop to ensure that parents know the potential outcomes it might cause.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is a significant partner in the school's leadership because it has a wide range of skills and ensures it receives the training it needs, all of which consequently benefit the school in its determination to become as effective as possible. It works with staff and parents in order to promote students' achievement and the well-being of both staff and students.
- Governors know the school's strengths and how it needs to improve. They question thoroughly the information given to them by the school and check its progress towards its goals very regularly.
- One of the governing body's strengths is the volume of information that it finds out for itself and its involvement in the strategic planning of the school. Through links with subject leaders, regular reports from leaders, observations of teaching, and governors' thorough analysis of national performance data, the governing body is able to challenge the school comprehensively.
- Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used and its impact. They also know the purposes of performance management and where teaching needs to improve. They do not agree to pay increases unless the staff meet their targets.
- Each governor's link to a priority area of the school development plan and the governing body's involvement in the school's evaluation of its performance means that the governors are involved in the strategic planning of the school and can influence its direction.
- The governors oversee the school's finances very thoroughly. They measure the impact of spending on, for example, achievement and attendance.
- The governing body oversees safeguarding well and procedures meet the statutory regulations.

## 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>	138414
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	425696

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>	Academy sponsor led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	808
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ken Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Scott Burnside
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 232 2338
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