

Chancellor's School

Pine Grove, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, AL9 7BN

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students reach high standards and make good progress. Both attainment and progress are steadily improving.
- The proportion of students obtaining five A*-C grades including English and mathematics is significantly above average. Literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately reinforced.
- Teaching is good and improving. Rigorous and regularly assessments give teachers a clear picture of students' attainment and progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported in line with their needs and make good progress.
- Behaviour is good. Students are proud of their school and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Students say they feel safe and happy in school and their parents and carers agree.
- The sixth form is good. It is well led. Students are well cared for academically and pastorally, and achieve well.
- The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership.
- Leaders, managers and governors have worked effectively to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching this year.
- The curriculum prepares students for life in modern Britain. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school and its performance. They are supportive and ready to challenge whenever necessary.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some groups of students, including the most able, are not always challenged at the right level of difficulty to ensure they learn rapidly.
- Students do not always respond to the detailed guidance they are given about how to improve their work.
- Subject leaders' expectations and monitoring procedures are not consistently rigorous.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered evidence on teaching and learning by observing lessons, looking at students' work and talking to them about it to assess students' understanding and attitudes to learning. Six joint observations were carried out with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed a range of activities carried out by the school to support individuals and small groups of students.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and four groups of students.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 314 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own externally commissioned survey of parents' views, and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 64 staff.
- The inspectors looked at the school's improvement plan, its data on students' attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a wide range of policies and procedures, and the arrangements for the safeguarding of students.
- An inspector attended an assembly.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of students' work jointly with subject leaders and members of the senior leadership team.
- An inspector listened to students reading.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
Ian Wilson	Additional Inspector
James Fuller	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is currently undergoing a programme of building works.
- The large majority of the students are White British.
- A very small number of students are educated away from the school at local work-related educational providers. At present, this is via motor mechanics training at Wheels in Stevenage.
- Sixth form provision is offered in a consortium arrangement with Mount Grace School in Potters Bar.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding for particular groups of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning across the school by:
 - ensuring all groups of students, including the most able, are challenged at an appropriate level
 - making sure that students respond to the detailed feedback given by teachers about how to improve their work.
- Raise achievement across the school by:
 - making sure that subject leaders' expectations and monitoring of the standards to be achieved are consistently rigorous.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has worked effectively with senior leaders, staff, governors, parents and students to improve the school. He has accurately identified raising achievement and improving teaching as key priorities and is successfully developing these areas. A large number of parents who responded to the online survey commented on the positive difference his leadership has made to the school, including through raised expectations of behaviour.
- The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The headteacher provides strong and decisive leadership. As a result, attainment and progress rates have improved, the sixth form is good, behaviour is good and leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are accurate.
- Work is still under way to make achievement and teaching consistently outstanding. The systems put in place by the school are ensuring that progress in these areas is increasingly rapid. Discussions in staff groups are taking place about how the new assessment procedures, which the school intends to have fully in place by September 2015, will impact on student progress.
- The grouping of students in sets and closer attention to the needs of all groups are helping to increase the challenge for students so that results continue to improve. The school has increased its checks to ensure that the level of challenge is consistent and high enough to take the school forward as rapidly as it aims to go.
- Subject leaders' roles have been reviewed and refined. The school has grouped subject leaders into broader faculties, which encourages discussion and joint planning. However, leaders recognise that expectations of students and monitoring of the standards to be achieved are not yet consistently rigorous.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Leaders analyse data effectively and provide additional support for disadvantaged students in English and mathematics on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Support staff are focusing on improving progress in mathematics this year so that it reaches the same levels achieved by extra work in English last year.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and caters well for the needs of all students. Curriculum information on the school website meets all statutory requirements. The subjects on offer are enhanced by a good range of additional activities and clubs which large numbers of students join. Together with an increased emphasis on cultural development, the curriculum is helping to prepare students well for life in modern Britain. Alternative provision is used where other providers offer courses which the school does not currently provide, such as motor mechanics, to fully meet students' career aspirations. Students on these courses achieve well because of the good quality of provision.
- The school is working successfully from Year 7 onwards to raise achievement for disadvantaged students in all subjects, including English and mathematics. It liaises effectively with parents and carers to keep them well informed about achievement. Good links with feeder schools, other providers and institutions of higher education, including the local university, ensure that careers guidance in Years 8 to 13 is effective.
- Leaders' procedures for managing teachers' performance are rigorous and carried out in line with the national *Teachers' Standards*. Staff are held accountable for the progress and attainment of their classes and pay progression is not automatic. They benefit from a wide range of suitable training opportunities.
- Safeguarding practices and procedures meet all current national requirements. Staff and governors are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school has recently reviewed this area and acted appropriately and speedily to enhance students' cultural development. Students' social development is very strong because they benefit from a wide range of

opportunities to contribute to the school and community. Spiritual and moral development is supported well by assemblies and the 'How to Thrive' project.

- Links with the local authority are regular and are accessed whenever necessary. The local authority has provided effective support and reviews to ensure that the school continues to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governance is a growing strength. Governors are united with the headteacher and staff in their determination to improve the school. They are supportive, as indicated by the large number who met with the lead inspector, but also prepared to challenge, as they have done about behaviour, achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors contribute to the school improvement plan and evaluation, and are up to speed with work on the curriculum and assessment procedures. They know about the quality of teaching through regular visits to lessons and contact with teachers, students and parents. Governors have a rigorous approach to the management of staff performance, which is carefully monitored. Good teaching is rewarded by increased remuneration where appropriate. Governors help to ensure, by the examples they set, that the school is a tolerant community where there is no discrimination and all have an equal opportunity to succeed. They have a good understanding of performance data and ensure that the pupil premium is being used increasingly effectively to promote achievement and close gaps in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. It is equally so in lessons and around the school. Students move in an orderly fashion and school uniform is of a high standard. Students are courteous to staff, visitors and each other. They show respect for others' points of view because they know the importance of tolerant attitudes in school and society. Students feel that behaviour has improved and the very large majority of the parents and carers who replied to the online survey feel that behaviour is managed well.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very positive. They arrive promptly to lessons with the right equipment and ready to learn. Large numbers are involved in extra-curricular activities, on the school council and in fund raising, all of which indicates their commitment to the school and its values.
- Students report that there is very little bullying in school. They say that any problems are quickly resolved because an adult is always available to help resolve them. Students are aware of the different forms bullying may take, such as cyber and homophobic bullying. The school deals effectively in assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons with such issues, and with the effects of discriminatory and derogatory language.
- Students have a heightened understanding of risk and extremism because these aspects are also covered in lessons and assemblies. For example, the school is strengthening its citizenship programmes to reflect the impact of recent national and international events.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe, including during the building works currently occurring and if they are educated off-site. Parents and carers agree that their children are kept safe. Risk assessments are rigorous and fire drills regular.
- Attendance for all groups has improved overall over the last three years and is now good. Persistent absence rates have fallen. Students are rarely late to school or lessons.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been dropping but rose last year as the school implemented a 'zero tolerance' behaviour policy, which now ensures very high standards of behaviour across the school. There is very little evidence of poor behaviour.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The quality of teaching is rising. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm to enliven lesson content and engage students in learning. A wide range of teaching strategies is supplemented by excellent study resources, for example in psychology, English and physical education, which enhance students' progress and understanding. The faculty system ensures that literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced well in other subjects.
- More open-ended tasks provide students with freedom to work to the extent of their capabilities. Learning is reinforced by the homework regularly set. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because all students frequently work on similar tasks which, although demanding, do not always fully challenge more able students. Expectations of what students should achieve have risen so that the number of top grades is increasing, but the school feels that even more could reach that standard.
- Teaching staff share their classroom skills as part of the new faculty system and based on the analysis of their own effectiveness. The school is looking at ways to increase this sharing as part of the push to drive the quality of teaching to the highest level.
- Teachers often use questions well to promote discussion and generate deeper thinking and a lively exchange of views, focusing on the reasons behind students' thinking. For example, in a Year 12 English lesson analysing the characteristics of dramatic literature, students were engaged by comparing the impact of the play and its film version.
- Teachers take care to demonstrate what they wish students to do by modelling the work to be done, reshaping tasks and checking regularly on students' progress in the course of their teaching. Teaching staff provide encouragement and well-targeted support to all groups, including the disadvantaged, the more able and those who may find the work difficult. Students are fully aware that they are in school to learn, and improve and respond very positively to the support and encouragement which is a part of all teaching.
- The school checks with providers on the quality of the provision offered when students are educated off-site and keeps parents well informed.
- An ongoing focus on literacy and numeracy, communication and good reading skills means that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment. Classroom work is supplemented by effective support in small groups or one-to-one sessions.
- Students' work is usually well presented. It is regularly marked and often accompanied by helpful indications about how to improve. Many students respond to the detailed comments but some miss the opportunity offered by correction to avoid repetition of errors.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Students arrive with attainment that is well above average and make good progress as they proceed through the school. Although current data show a greater variety of attainment in the most recently arrived year groups, attainment and progress rates are rising across the school.
- Students attain well and make good and increasing progress in English and mathematics during their time at the school. The proportion achieving five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has been significantly above the national average for several years. Mathematics has been slightly stronger than English but the whole-school focus on literacy has helped to raise English results this year.
- Students have been entered early for mathematics examinations at GCSE in the past and then done further studies in mathematics or other subjects, but this approach is now only used for a small targeted group of students, all of whom are expected to make further progress in mathematics.
- Students make good progress with the development of reading skills because support programmes at Key

Stage 3 reinforce these skills and other aspects of literacy, including writing, as part of the Year 7 catch-up premium spending. Similar work is now taking place in mathematics. Year 7 students are about to demonstrate their skills and confidence in presentations at the forthcoming open evenings.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers, and sometimes better. They are accurately and quickly identified. Support is tailored effectively to their needs and adjusted as necessary. Information about students and their needs is shared well between staff and with parents to facilitate progress.
- Disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium are making good progress. In English and mathematics at GCSE in 2013, they were about one grade behind other students in the school and half a grade behind other students nationally. Current data indicate that gaps are closing across the school this year, and progress is increasingly rapid because students are well supported and the range and quality of that support are continually reviewed.
- More-able students also make good progress. They benefit from a reasonably high level of challenge which is leading to higher proportions achieving the top grades in many subjects, although the school is focused on increasing the attainment of this group.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They feel that they are achieving more and progressing faster because teaching has improved, and are proud of the progress they are making. Parents and carers noted their improved attitudes in the online survey.

The sixth form provision is good

- Sixth form numbers have been stable over time. Retention rates are high. The very large majority of the students come from the school's own Year 11. The school offers some courses in a consortium arrangement with another local secondary school to ensure that students have a wider choice of work-related options and a wider academic curriculum.
- Students' achievement is good and rising this year. At A level, students attained significantly above average points scores per entry in 2013. A* to E grade passes have been significantly above average for three years and A*/A passes in 2013. Attainment at AS level was significantly above average in 2012 and dipped slightly in 2013, but these students had joined the sixth form with lower attainment. The 2014 group achieved an increased number of grades at A-C and more A grades than in 2013. Otherwise, attainment was similar to 2013.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm to engage students fully in learning. Every student has a monthly mentoring session with their form tutor on pastoral and academic matters. More- and less-able students benefit from additional mentoring with the sixth form leadership team. Extra help on a one-to-one basis is available whenever requested or necessary. This ensures that progress rates are similar for all groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Behaviour is good. Sixth form students are proud of their high profile around the school as mentors and prefects. Their smart, business-like appearance is one indication of their positive attitudes to behaviour and learning and sets an example for the rest of the school.
- Students feel safe because they are very supportive of each other and enjoy good relationships with teachers. There is always someone to talk to about any concerns. Students are well informed about the problems associated with discrimination, bullying and extremism.
- The sixth form is led and managed well. Excellent transition arrangements, praised by students, ensure that students are well prepared for sixth form life. Personal, social and employability skills are developed well by the extensive support and preparation given to students. Large numbers go on to higher education.

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	117591
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442005

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1080
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Juliette Castang
Headteacher	David Croston
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2013
Telephone number	01707 650702
Fax number	01707 663204
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