

The Charles Dickens School

Broadstairs Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 2RL

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The headteacher does not communicate a clear vision for the school. Many staff feel that there is a lack of consistency in how the school works from day to day. Crucial policies are not in place.
- The governing body is failing to monitor the quality of the school's work well enough. It does not challenge the headteacher to improve how well the school is working.
- Leaders do not present information about how well students are doing clearly enough for staff to be able to use it effectively, or analyse important information about behaviour and safety.
- The school is not a community in which people's differences are sufficiently valued and respected. This is not managed adequately by the school.
- The poor behaviour of a minority is a significant concern. As a consequence, students are not always kept safe.
- Attendance is below national averages and is in decline; exclusions are above average, and are increasing.
- Leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching or improve it well enough.
- Too much teaching fails to give students a good understanding of key ideas and basic subject knowledge. Teachers do not check students' progress during lessons well enough, and the standards students achieve are too often gauged wrongly by staff. Teaching rarely meets the needs of all groups of students properly.
- Achievement is inadequate because of the poor progress made by many students over their five years at the school, and in the majority of subjects; this leads to low attainment by the end of Year 11.
- Disadvantaged students generally make less progress than others and the gap is widening between them and other students, despite the school receiving pupil premium funding to reduce it.
- Achievement in mathematics is particularly low and teaching is not good enough to improve it.
- The sixth form is inadequate. Examination results for the first students were very low.

The school has the following strengths

- Students achieve well in English. Despite arriving at the school with lower than average Key Stage 2 results they achieve near national average standards in this subject.
- Some middle leaders have an accurate picture of the significant improvements required in teaching and outcomes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons, including several jointly with senior staff.
- Inspectors met with senior staff, representatives of the governing body, other staff, groups of students and a representative of the local authority.
- The school’s development planning and self-evaluation documents, policies and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- The 55 responses to Parent View were taken into account, as were the views of the 77 staff who returned questionnaires.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.

Inspection team

Alan Taylor-Bennett, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Pamela Rutherford	Additional Inspector
Veronica Young	Additional Inspector
Janet Hallett	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

- The Charles Dickens School is larger than the average-size school.
- In September 2013 the school opened a sixth form.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational need (as defined by the previous Special Educational Needs Code of Practice) is higher than the national average. The proportion supported at school action is also higher than average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is slightly above the national average. Some students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The school serves a community with relatively little ethnic or cultural diversity. Nearly all students are of White British heritage.
- Around 45 students in Key Stage 4 attend part-time at Thanet Skills Studio, and eight attend full-time at the local pupil referral unit but remain on the roll of the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has a specially resourced unit funded by the local authority to support up to six students with a visual impairment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the school by:
 - ensuring students, including those in the sixth form, acquire a secure understanding of key ideas and knowledge in every lesson and in every subject
 - ensuring that all teachers have an accurate and thorough grasp of what students know and understand throughout lessons, and are assessing students' work accurately, so they can adjust their teaching as required
 - giving students of different abilities, especially the most able and those who find learning difficult, work that involves appropriate levels of challenge.
- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership of the school by:
 - communicating the school's vision and priorities consistently and clearly
 - making accurate judgements of the quality of teaching, and providing effective staff training
 - improving how information about how well students are doing is presented to help middle leaders and other staff to be able to use to support students' achievement more effectively
 - improving the development plan so it can support school improvement and accountability
 - ensuring that an external review of governance is undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved
 - ensuring that an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Improve the progress that all groups of students make in all subjects by:
 - identifying strategies that help students to make rapid and secure progress in some subjects, and sharing this good practice with all staff
 - establishing a clear strategy for the use of the pupil premium and monitoring its impact frequently
 - improving the strategies used to support the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs to accelerate their progress.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - improving attendance to at least the national average

- helping students to understand the importance of having positive attitudes to differences between people, to address bullying in the school and to prepare students for life in modern day Britain
- delivering a programme of e-safety in all year groups to help stay students safe on the internet
- eliminating low level disruption to lessons.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until notified otherwise.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior leaders have failed to secure or sustain important improvements in achievement, attendance and in the behaviour and safety of students since the last inspection.
 - The vision of the headteacher is unclear to middle leaders and staff. The reasons behind decisions are not always communicated, and there is a lack of clarity in the senior team about how things will be done. This limits the effectiveness of subject directors, and the four heads of college do not always feel confident about how to respond or contribute to whole-school strategies. Around half of the staff who returned questionnaires expressed concerns around the leadership and management of the school and a lack of consistency of approach.
 - The development plan identifies the right priorities but essential detail is lacking about the precise actions to be taken, what will be achieved at each stage in the year, and how impact will be measured. The school's self-evaluation is superficial and overly positive about all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher was not aware until too late that important assessment information in 2013/14 was inaccurate; this meant that a sharp drop in standards in 2014 came as a surprise.
 - The leadership of the school is failing to address shortfalls in the quality of teaching. Teaching quality is not gauged accurately because leaders fail to take into account its impact on students' progress and the quality of their learning. The school's definition of good teaching is too broad; as a consequence not enough teaching that requires improvement is identified as such. This means that it cannot be addressed properly.
 - Middle leaders have become better at steering improvements, but they are not always well-supported to do so. For example, they have enthusiasm to improve the quality of teaching but lack clear direction on how to do it. Some raise important issues with the senior team but feel ignored.
 - Information about how well students are doing is not organised and presented adequately. Some middle leaders are frustrated that they cannot use this important information quickly and easily to respond to underachievement. During the inspection this meant the special educational needs coordinator was not able to evaluate the progress of students receiving extra support. Records kept of behavioural issues are not analysed because staff cannot access the information properly, and cannot therefore identify or tackle common causes of poor behaviour.
 - The curriculum fails to support the achievement and welfare of students. There is too little planned, high quality teaching about how differences in, for example, sexual orientation or ethnic heritages, are valued and respected, and so students are not prepared well for life in modern-day Britain. The curriculum information offered to parents is incomplete, so they cannot use it easily to support their child's learning. The timetable is not constructed well: there are too many classes with more than one teacher in some subjects.
 - Several key policies are out of date, including the pupil premium policy. Other very important policies, including those on literacy, and teaching and learning, are not in place. Policies around early entry for examinations and the choice of examination specification are inconsistent. Decisions on early examination entry are driven too strongly by a perceived need to improve the school's headline performance figures, rather than the achievement of students. The school is failing to ensure equality of opportunity.
 - The off-site provision for students is coordinated effectively. There are good systems to keep in touch with the two main providers and to maintain a regular flow of information about students' achievements and attendance.
 - Some useful advice is given to students about careers and future training and education. However, too many students ended up last year on sixth form courses which did not suit their needs, and too little information is provided before Year 11. The proportion of ex-students who are not in employment, education or training is relatively low.
 - The local authority has not responded to clear signals over recent years that students' achievements are not good enough. Neither has it offered effective challenge and support to the headteacher and the governing body to ensure that enough is being done about this. Their assessment of the school's current effectiveness is optimistic, and they are not therefore serving the best interests of students in the school.
- The governance of the school** is failing to offer sufficient challenge and support to the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors have the best interests of students and staff at heart, but they are not identifying important aspects of the school's work that require urgent improvement. For example, they know what the pupil premium is spent on, but have no sense of its impact on disadvantaged youngsters. Meetings cover many essential aspects of the running of the school, including keeping a close eye on finances, but do not involve probing some issues of fundamental importance, for example around the

obvious mismatch between the school's view of the quality of teaching, and outcomes for students over recent years, and the accuracy of assessment. This limits governors' capacity to make good judgements about which teachers should be rewarded for good work. Too few governors know how to use information from the Data Dashboard and other sources, and this information is not shared effectively. Governors are not keeping up to date about important issues such as the implications of the new national curriculum and, at the time of the inspection, had insufficient knowledge of how poorly the first cohort of students in the new sixth form had achieved. They ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met, but they are not checking the quality of them frequently enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Many are welcoming to visitors and show kindness and respect to each other, but a significant minority bully and abuse their peers and behave badly in lessons and around the school.
- The school's work to keep students safe is inadequate because it is not addressing the poor behaviour of this minority effectively.
- Students' capacity to feel safe in the school depends too much on their making good friendships, avoiding coming into contact with certain other students, and factors such as their ethnic heritage. There are unacceptable racially-based remarks and too much prejudice-based bullying. Friction is often avoided between different groups of students by their remaining separate from each other. The consequence of the school's failure to address deep-seated tensions is that fights break out, sometimes more than once a week, and students are hurt. The school is failing to tackle discrimination.
- Attendance has been below the national average since the last inspection; it worsened over 2013/14. Instances of fixed term exclusions, already high for students supported at school action plus, also increased over this period. This was mainly due to an increase in repeat offences by students whose behaviour was not being addressed successfully. Senior leaders attribute this to the curriculum not being right for some students, or because 'some students have special needs', or due to the challenging nature of some home backgrounds, but offer few solutions.
- In lessons, students are usually cooperative. In some lessons, when their interest is stimulated, they show a good capacity to respond imaginatively to the teaching. In one lesson on the Nazi/Soviet pact, for example, students were able to debate issues around this topic and make links to modern-day Europe. However, students too often sit and watch the teaching, or quietly day-dream, rather than think, challenge their own understanding, and ask questions. Students reported that a significant minority of lessons are disrupted by a steady undercurrent of poor behaviour.
- A quarter of parents who responded to Parent View, and just over a third of the staff who responded to their questionnaire, expressed concerns around the behaviour of students and its management.
- Some staff are felt to be approachable, and many students say that there is someone they could go to for help, if it were needed. Their confidence about the outcome is less certain. They say that the school responds to specific instances of misbehaviour but is not always sufficiently alert to the need to intervene early. A scrutiny of the school's behaviour logs showed that reporting of incidents is tardy, and the success or otherwise of responses not always recorded. Detentions are often a response to misbehaviour but students have often failed to attend.
- Some parts of the school are attractive and art work contributes to a pleasant working environment which many students enjoy and respect. However, in other areas too little use is made of display to stimulate learning. Many students wear their uniform smartly, but boys' shirts are often hanging out untidily.
- Students are keen to understand issues such as the implications of being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender but feel that the school does not provide enough information and a strong moral direction on these and similar issues. Differences are therefore usually, but not always, tolerated, rather than respected or valued.
- The school refers safeguarding issues to the local authority reliably, and makes timely and effective responses in individual cases. There is, however, a lack of any reflection and evaluation, which could lead to specific topics being taught better in the curriculum, such as e-safety, to help to reduce the impact of such problems. The school is therefore not making an adequate contribution to the social and moral education of its students.

The quality of teaching**is inadequate**

- Teaching is failing to promote rapid and secure progress for students across all subjects. Teachers plan lessons and know about the characteristics of individual students that may affect how they learn, but often the same work is presented to the whole class in the same way. This means that more able students are not challenged enough, and those who struggle to learn flounder.
- Too many assessments of students' achievement have been inaccurate, particularly over the last year. This has led to inflated views of how well students are doing, and an associated failure to teach differently, and offer extra support where this is needed.
- Too few teachers check how well students are learning at important points in the lesson. Teachers too often aim to get through tasks without much regard for how well students understand important concepts and acquire knowledge. There is some good practice in the school: in one mathematics lesson observed the teacher skilfully diagnosed serious gaps in students' knowledge about circle geometry through probing but sensitive questioning, and continually responded to the need to revisit basic ideas and remind them of terminology. Such practice is not common, however, and questioning usually serves only to close discussions down and move the topic on.
- Marking is inconsistent in approach, and there are few signs of its effective impact. The school's policy on homework is enacted inconsistently. Year 11 students described having around four hours of homework each week so far this year, which they described as 'not enough' and said that it wasn't helping them to learn; they also said that they had had very little set over their Year 10.
- A relatively large number of students arrive in Year 7 with low reading ages and poor communication skills. The school shows a good awareness of this but there is little evidence of any concerted response across subjects. There is no policy on literacy steering the work of teachers in this important area. The school is aware of a mismatch between its plans to improve literacy and what is happening in classrooms, but has not made an effective response. There has been a coordinated approach to encouraging reading through the introduction of a commercially produced scheme, but little evaluation of its impact. The impact of the Year 7 catch-up premium is not evaluated well enough by leaders to know if it is effective.
- The work of teaching assistants is not directed well enough for it to make a good contribution to learning. Too often, staff who are in lessons to support individual students, remain distant from the work of the class and do too little to challenge and support individuals. Students with needs associated with their visual impairment are well cared for, and their support is often better organised, but they are not able to contribute to lessons as much as they should.
- The special educational needs coordinator is aware of the need to improve teaching for those with additional needs. Inconsistency by senior staff in their response to the poor behaviour of some students with additional learning needs, and a lack of understanding by them and by too many teachers of which strategies work best, hinder improvements.
- The school offers a number of valuable opportunities to broaden students' cultural education, including work in art to commemorate World War 1, taking part in the BBC News Schools Report last year, Rock Assembly 2014, and a range of sporting activities.

The achievement of pupils**is inadequate**

- Students have not made adequate overall progress in their time at the school, since the last inspection. Examination results in 2014 indicate that their progress worsened over 2013/14.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grade Cs including English and mathematics improved in 2013 but was still below the national average; in 2014 it dropped to be well below minimum expectations.
- Students' achievement in mathematics has been in need of urgent improvement for some years and was inadequate over the last year. The quality of their learning currently is severely compromised by weak teaching in this subject.
- Students make good progress in English. The proportion of last year's examination candidates making the progress expected of them, and the proportion doing even better, are high and above national averages. This means that students that arrived at the school with lower than average standards of English at Key Stage 2 are leaving with average standards by the end of Year 11.
- Disadvantaged students perform markedly less well than their peers. This is despite the school receiving significant extra funding from the pupil premium to boost their achievement. Historically, they have made less progress than other students, and the attainment of this group over 2013/14 worsened. This was especially true in mathematics where only one in three students eligible for free school meals made the progress expected of them. This continued a trend where they achieve almost a grade lower than their

peers at GCSE. In 2014, this same group of students did much better in English: two thirds made expected progress, indicating that this subject has supported disadvantaged students to once again do as well as their peers. The progress of disadvantaged students currently in school is not closing fast enough.

- Students who are disabled or have special education needs do not make adequate progress. This is because their needs are not understood well enough. This means that the approaches taken to helping them to learn, and the nature of the work they are set, are not appropriate in too many lessons. This is especially true of students supported at school action plus, many of whom have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- A relatively small proportion of students arrive in Year 7 with higher than average prior attainment. Too few go on to achieve the highest grades at GCSE because not enough is expected of them and they are not offered enough intellectual challenge.
- Many students who attend the local Pupil Referral Unit leave with basic qualifications and most move onto college courses and employment with training. Those that spend one day per week at Thanet Skills Studio benefit from their vocational learning there but do not achieve well overall.
- Those with visual impairments, and supported by the school's unit, make similar progress to that of their peers but this is not sufficient to enable them to leave with examination results that reflect their potential.

The sixth form provision

is inadequate

- The first set of results for this new sixth form were extremely disappointing. The sixth form did not meet students' needs: nearly one in three AS-level examination entries did not reach the minimum standard required for a pass grade. Too many students started on courses for which they did not have the necessary qualifications. Only English and sociology achieved a 100% pass rate; other subjects such as chemistry, mathematics and biology had only a handful of pass grades between them. Current students' achievement is too variable, with learning in several subjects remaining inadequate so far this year.
- Too much teaching fails to promote the required level of insight into the subject studied. In one A-level mathematics lesson observed students were being led line-by-line through a problem, and given no opportunity to think mathematically for themselves. Subjects in which students have no prior experience of learning, such as sociology and psychology, manage the transition from GCSE better than others.
- Students in the sixth form feel well cared-for and are offered good careers advice and guidance once their courses have started. However, the advice provided before they start has only been improved for this year's joiners to avoid so many beginning ill-suited courses of study. Useful information is provided for them on how to stay safe and maintain good levels of physical and emotional health. Many show resilience in their learning and work hard in lessons. Professional relationships between staff and students are positive, despite expectations of progress sometimes being too low; students feel that staff are supportive.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form was neglectful in that it failed to ensure that the new sixth form was ready to deliver a good quality, successful experience for its first cohort. Since that time there are signs of a clearer vision for the sixth form beginning to be established and better procedures being put in place to support students.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills and everyone who still needs to obtain a GCSE grade C or better in mathematics or English is following an appropriate course to help them do so. There are plans to have some work experience for Year 13 but this is not yet finalised.

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	118910
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	447761

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	1189
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Towe
Headteacher	Andrew Olsson
Date of previous school inspection	12-13 May 2011
Telephone number	01843 862988
Fax number	01843 865047
Email address	office@cds.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

