

# King's Grove School

Buchan Grove, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 7NQ

## Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Senior leaders and governors have failed to tackle underachievement and weak teaching effectively. The leadership and management of teaching are inadequate.
- Governors have only very recently begun to hold school leaders to account more effectively, particularly with regard to the achievement of different groups of students.
- Over half of the staff who responded to the inspection survey say that the school is not well led and managed.
- The proportion of students gaining 5 or more A\*-C grades, including in English and mathematics, at GCSE level was below the national average in 2013. Given their starting points, this represented inadequate achievement. The school's predictions of higher achievement in 2014 have not materialised.
- Disadvantaged students make poor progress from their different starting points in English and mathematics. Students with special educational needs also underachieve.
- The impact of teaching on students' achievement over time is inadequate. Some teachers exhibit low expectations of what students can achieve. Inconsistent marking and feedback has little impact on improving the progress that students make.
- The school's work to develop students' skills in literacy and numeracy is inadequate and fails to prepare students effectively for their future learning.
- The behaviour and safety of students requires improvement. Some low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons where students are insufficiently challenged spoils learning. Too many opportunities to develop students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education are missed.

### The school has the following strengths

- New leaders of English, mathematics and special educational needs display a determined and robust vision for improvement.
- Students feel safe in school and the school's procedures for safeguarding are good. Students speak positively about the school's good work on bullying and internet safety.
- Overall attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching across the school. An inspector visited students on alternative education placements. Four observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutor groups, an assembly and a careers event.
- Inspectors spoke with six groups of students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 about their progress in lessons, their views about the school's effectiveness and their safety in school.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, middle leaders and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also looked at the school's review of its own effectiveness, improvement planning and other school policies. Inspectors considered information presented by the school in response to the most recent monitoring visit.
- Inspectors took into account 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 20 inspection questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked carefully at students' written work in lessons and engaged in a detailed analysis of students' books and files in Key Stage 4 in partnership with the school's leaders.

## Inspection team

John Townsley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Nigel Pressnell	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), 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

- King's Grove School is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The number of students on roll has fallen significantly in the last three years.
- The school is a Co-operative Foundation Trust School.
- Most students are White British and speak English as their first language. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is small, but increasing.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those that have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school uses two alternative providers of education: Reaseheath College and the local authority's pupil referral unit.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- Several key leaders have been appointed recently, including those with responsibility for English, mathematics and students with disabilities and special educational needs.

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

- Significantly improve the effectiveness of the senior leadership and governance in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of students, so that they are at least good by:
  - ensuring that all leaders develop a precise view of the school's work and are tightly focused on bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching, students' achievement and behaviour in classrooms
  - using the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the achievement of those students it is intended to support
  - robustly supporting the work of subject leaders in overcoming the impact of weak teaching over time on students' achievement.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and supports all students to make good or better progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
  - raising the level of expectation that teachers have of all students, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, so that they provide challenging and engaging activities in lessons and in all students' homework
  - making certain that the work of teaching assistants is well directed, including when they are supporting students with disabilities and special educational needs
  - marking students' books consistently and in appropriate detail, so that students receive the guidance they need to improve the standard of their work, and ensuring that they respond appropriately to the marking
  - teachers insisting of students that their skills in writing are of the highest quality
  - ensuring that the systems for dealing with low-level disruption are always applied effectively
  - making sure that opportunities to develop students' spiritual, moral and social education are not missed.

- Significantly improve standards in English and mathematics for all students, but particularly for the disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, so that they are at least in line with those expected nationally by:
  - supporting weaker readers through the effective use of the Year 7 catch-up reading programme
  - ensuring that all staff support the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, including comprehension, grammar and spelling, across the curriculum and in all year groups
  - supporting and further developing the personal reading habits of older students.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external 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 leadership and management

### are inadequate

- Over time, senior leaders, including governors, have been ineffective in improving the quality of teaching, students' achievement and behaviour. The school's performance has declined since the last inspection and the issues identified at that inspection have not been addressed effectively. The leadership's lack of effective strategies for improving the school are still a key weakness.
- Leaders have been too generous in their assessment of the quality of teaching and its impact on achievement. An extensive range of evidence seen by the inspection team shows that the view of its work is too positive. This results in a lack of accuracy and impact in the school's strategic development planning.
- Governors and senior leaders have failed to use funding to support disadvantaged students and weaker readers effectively.
- Leaders do not ensure that students enjoy equality of opportunity in their learning, because there are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching they receive. For example, disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs achieve significantly less well than other students nationally.
- Students' behaviour has deteriorated since the last inspection. Leaders are failing to deal consistently and robustly with low-level disruptive behaviour which is spoiling the climate for learning in some lessons.
- Previous leadership in English, mathematics and special educational needs has been very weak and has acted as a barrier to the improvement of students' achievement through the impact of effective teaching. Governors and senior leaders have been far too slow in addressing those key weaknesses. New middle leaders show a clear understanding of the challenges facing the school and are establishing effective plans for improvement but have not yet done enough to improve the quality of teaching.
- The monitoring of staff performance is beginning to strengthen, largely as a consequence of the determined work of senior leaders and new leadership in the governing body.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have failed to ensure the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. They have not used additional funding effectively to support weaker readers in Years 7 and 8, leaving them ill-prepared for the challenges of the curriculum as they progress through the school.
- Students appreciate the range of opportunities that are made available to them outside lessons, particularly in sport and art.
- The school's work on preparing young people for life in modern Britain is ineffective, because it lacks any cohesive planning. As a consequence, too many opportunities to engage students in exploring and understanding their role in modern Britain are missed. Despite this, students spoke very positively about their involvement in leadership roles in school, which are often linked to charitable or fundraising initiatives.
- The school works hard to prepare young people effectively for employment and further training. This was seen in a careers event during which students showed high levels of motivation and a clear understanding of future opportunities.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The concerns raised by the most recent section 8 monitoring visit have been addressed effectively and this includes the welfare of students not educated on the school site. An inspector's visit to meet students attending their alternative provision confirmed that they make good progress and this, together with their behaviour and attendance, is now carefully monitored by the school.
- The local authority's support for the school and the support provided by the Co-operative Trust have not improved any aspect of achievement, the quality of teaching or the standard of students' behaviour. This is because the depth of their monitoring is not good enough.
- Although over 90% of parents who completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) either agreed or strongly agreed that the school is well led and managed, more than half of the staff who completed the survey offered to them, were of the view that the school is not well led and managed.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Recent improvements to governance, including the appointment of a new Chair of the Governing Body, have not yet impacted upon the quality of teaching, achievement or behaviour. Very recently introduced systems designed to hold leaders to account with much greater sharpness have not had time to make an impact.

- Governors have failed to ensure that leaders have fulfilled their responsibility for developing the literacy and numeracy skills of all students. They have also failed to ensure that senior leaders have used the funding intended to support disadvantaged students and younger students who arrive at the school as weak readers effectively. The consequences of these failings for those students who have not received the intensive support to which they are entitled are significant.
- Governors have failed to understand the importance of analysing the performance data of all groups of students in the school. In discussions with the inspection team, some governors continued to show a limited understanding of the significance of the underperformance of disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and the link between the quality of teaching and performance management, including rewarding good teaching and tackling underperformance.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

## **requires improvement**

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students' attitudes to learning vary and, where teaching lacks pace and challenge, some students become uninterested in learning.
- Students confirmed through a range of discussions that the low-level disruptive behaviour seen by inspectors in some lessons was consistent with their own experience.
- Around the school the behaviour of students is generally good. Students move sensibly around the premises and arrive punctually to lessons. Discussions with groups of students confirmed that this behaviour is often typical and that they feel safe and happy on school premises. However, during the inspection, a very small number of older students were disrespectful to members of the inspection team.
- Attendance has improved over the last year and is now in line with national averages. Fixed-term and permanent exclusions have also reduced significantly and now compare well to similar schools nationally.
- Many students are very keen to do well in their learning and show a determination to prepare themselves well for the future. Many showed good attitudes at a careers event organised by the school during the inspection.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Low-level disruption sometimes contributes to reduced learning and a disorderly classroom environment. Some students spoke of their occasional unease when disruption occurs in lessons and the impact that this has on their welfare.
- Students know how to keep safe and secure, including in their use of the internet. They confirm that this is as a result of the good information they receive in lessons and in assemblies.
- Students were confident in talking about bullying and what to do if it occurs. They believe that bullying is dealt with robustly by the school when it takes place and this is confirmed by the school's own behaviour records.
- The inspection team looked in great detail at the welfare and safety of students who receive their education off site. They are well cared for and are kept safe at all times.
- Parents who completed the questionnaire on Parent View were largely either in strong agreement or agreement that their children feel safe at the school.

## **The quality of teaching**

## **is inadequate**

- Students make inadequate progress, particularly in English and mathematics, as a result of the inconsistent and weak teaching over time which is insufficiently challenging and does not make students think carefully or extend their knowledge and understanding. In English and mathematics teaching fails to ensure that disadvantaged students make at least good progress.
- Some teachers fail to check on students' learning and do not adjust the work being done in lessons to ensure that all students have the opportunity to make at least good progress.
- A thorough analysis of students' work undertaken in partnership with the school showed the quality of marking to be variable, in line with the variable achievement of students. Even where marking provides good advice and guidance, most teachers do not check that students have acted upon the advice and improved their work. This undermines the progress students make.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is inadequate. The incorporation of literacy skills, such as spelling and comprehension, is poorly planned. The importance of high quality writing is not

promoted consistently well across all subjects and opportunities to re-enforce and develop numeracy skills are often missed. Poor literacy and numeracy skills are the major barrier to students making good progress; this is particularly the case for disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs.

- Where teaching and its impact over time are strongest, as is the case in science and humanities, students work well together and reflect sensitively upon their learning. Even where learning is strongest, however, teachers do not review students' work and progress sufficiently during lessons to extend their knowledge and challenge their thinking.
- Some students do not listen attentively to the teacher or to other students during lessons. Inattention and low-level disruptive behaviour are not managed well. Weaker teaching results in students lacking motivation and a determination to succeed in their work.
- Although there were examples of the good development of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education, such as in a Year 8 English lesson, where the teacher and students engaged in a thoughtful and very mature discussion about racial stereotypes, too many opportunities to develop students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education are missed in lessons and in tutor time.
- Teaching assistants and higher level teaching assistants work hard to support students with a range of abilities and needs. Their contribution, however, is often not directed well enough by teachers and this limits the overall impact of their work.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **is inadequate**

- From their individual starting points far too many students do not make sufficient progress over time. When they leave school at the end of Year 11, standards are below average for many students in a majority of subjects, including English and mathematics. As a consequence of this, their achievement is inadequate.
- Students' progress and levels of achievement are undermined by teaching which lacks the quality required to support good learning, and, critically, by students' inadequately developed skills in reading, writing, communication and numeracy. At the point of this inspection the school was still failing to support weaker readers in Year 7 through the effective use of the funding that has been allocated for that specific purpose.
- The school's predictions of higher achievement and improved rates of progress in 2014 have not materialised. Preliminary results for 2014, confirmed by the school, show that disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs have significantly underachieved. The attainment gap between disadvantaged students and others in the school who are not disadvantaged in terms of the numbers securing five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics at GCSE level, widened. The progress of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics was also very weak, particularly in comparison to their peers nationally and other students at the school.
- In 2013 disadvantaged students attained a full grade lower in English and in mathematics than other non-disadvantaged students at the school and nationally. Preliminary data for 2014 show that this gap has not narrowed. An analysis of the work of current students at the school who are entitled to support through the pupil premium shows that they continue to underachieve. Information provided by the school, for example, showed that in Year 10, over half of the students entitled to support through the pupil premium have made one level of progress or less in mathematics and English since joining the school in Year 7.
- Students with special educational needs underachieve because of the weakness of the school's work in developing literacy and numeracy and because many teachers fail to challenge and stretch those students in lessons. As a consequence of this, together with inadequately directed support, many make poor progress.
- Many students underachieve because expectations of them are too low. This is true for the most-able students, many of whom do not achieve the grade A\* and A grades at GCSE level of which they are capable.
- The small but increasing number of students from minority ethnic heritages achieve well.
- Students who are educated off site enjoy the experience and achieve well.
- In 2013 some students were entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics, significantly restricting the progress and number of grades achieved at A\* and A by the most able. The practice of entering students early for examinations has now ceased.

## 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>	111442
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	452740

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	558
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Trevor Langston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01270 661223
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