

Noel-Baker School

Bracknell Drive, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0BR

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students do not make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- In 2014 GCSE examinations, the proportions of students making good or better progress in English and mathematics were well below the national averages.
- Progress in mathematics is not improving as rapidly as in English.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough across all subjects to ensure that students make good or better progress.
- Teachers do not always make sufficient use of assessment information to plan work that fully stretches or challenges all groups of students, particularly the most able.
- The rate of progress of disadvantaged students is improving. However, there is still a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others in school and nationally.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to solve problems in other subjects.
- Progress in lessons sometimes slows down because of inappropriate behaviour by a few students when work is not properly matched to their abilities. This is not dealt with consistently well by all staff.
- Attendance has improved this year, but is still below average.
- Not all subject leaders consistently hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching or the progress made by students in their areas of responsibility.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Although it is improving, too many students still do not make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team is clear about what needs to improve and is taking effective action to improve the quality of teaching.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good.
- Achievement in English is improving because of better teaching, more effective use of information on what students know and can do, and the whole school focus on improving literacy.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for through a variety of activities in lessons and beyond the school day.
- Governors are better informed and have recently been involved in extensive training. They are challenging the senior leadership more rigorously to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Staff use effective systems to keep students safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 37 lessons to observe the progress and engagement of students. Seven of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- A number of other lessons were visited briefly to look at students' attitudes to learning.
- Inspectors reviewed the quality of the work in students' books to judge the effectiveness of marking, the progress of students over time, and the accuracy of the school's assessment data.
- Other aspects of the school day were observed, including an assembly, tutor time, students' behaviour at break, lunchtime and between lessons, and students' arrival and departure from the school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior staff and subject leaders. A meeting took place with six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a discussion was held with two representatives from the local authority, and a national leader of education who is supporting the school.
- Inspectors spoke with students formally in meetings, and informally in lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 55 parents and carers who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire. They also considered the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including: the school's data on students' progress; self-evaluation and improvement plans; training arrangements for teachers and other staff; checks on the quality of teaching; attendance records and behaviour logs; minutes of governing body meetings; documents relating to students' safety; and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Eric Winstone	Additional Inspector
Salim Akhtar	Additional Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Macfarlane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from minority ethnic groups. A lower-than-average proportion of students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- Seven students in Key Stage 4 and two in Key Stage 3 are educated away from the school site. They attend full time courses at Kingsmead School, Derby Royal Hospital, Derby Pride Academy or Lees Brook School.
- The school is receiving support from a national leader in education, and is working with the LEAD Academy Trust.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve both teaching and achievement in the main school and the sixth form, especially in mathematics, by:
 - using information about students' attainment and progress to set suitably challenging activities for all groups of students, particularly the most able
 - giving students more opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - subject leaders take full responsibility for the quality of teaching and students' achievement in their areas
 - all staff consistently apply school policies and improvement strategies.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - eliminating disruption in lessons, so that all students can get on with their work
 - making sure all staff consistently apply the behaviour management policy
 - improving attendance, particularly of disadvantaged students and those who are regularly absent.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders and the governors have not done enough to ensure that teaching and the progress that different groups of students make across all subjects and age groups are consistently good.
- Not all subject leaders are providing good leadership. Some have lacked rigour in monitoring the work in their areas. They have not focused enough on improving the quality of teaching and raising students' achievement. They have not challenged underperformance of staff or held them sufficiently to account to ensure they consistently apply policies for improvement.
- Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has introduced a number of policies to help the school improve. These are mostly having a positive effect. However, the policy for the management of students' behaviour is not consistently applied by all staff.
- The school's evaluation of its performance has become more focused and accurate over the last year. This is because of the introduction of better systems for monitoring teaching and tracking students' progress. The senior team has correctly identified what needs to be done to improve standards and raise achievement, and has introduced strategies to bring about the necessary changes. Senior staff with responsibilities for improving teaching, tracking students' achievement, and leading and managing the sixth form have had these responsibilities for less than a year. However, they have already brought about significant improvements.
- Since the previous inspection, revised systems for the management of teachers' performance have linked the quality of teaching, students' achievement and staff pay rises more closely together. Rigorous systems now identify and address any areas of weakness. Good support is given to staff to help them improve through an extensive range of training. The headteacher and governors are taking more decisive action when improvements are not sustained. Pay rises are only awarded for continued good performance.
- The school has recently revised the subjects offered in Key Stage 4 so that courses better match students' abilities and lead to appropriate academic qualifications. Previously it has entered students for a large number of BTEC courses and this has been detrimental to their opportunities in achieving five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. This was particularly true for the 2014 Year 11 students.
- Students are provided with good advice and guidance at the end of Year 11 and Year 13. This helps them progress into the next stage of their education, apprenticeships or the workplace.
- Additional funding is used wisely to make sure that disadvantaged students get the extra help they need. The funding has been used for additional teaching in English and mathematics, extra teaching assistants and mentors, and to provide alternative courses for students whose abilities and interests are better matched to work-related courses. It has also been used to give additional support, through the school's attendance officer, to disadvantaged students in danger of becoming persistent absentees. As a result, while still evident, the gaps between the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged and other students are closing across all year groups.
- The previous inspection identified the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development as a weakness. Leaders have addressed this through a well-planned programme of activities. This programme includes assemblies, lessons and tutor time, educational trips in this country and abroad, and many clubs beyond the school day. The school helps students develop their leadership roles by encouraging them to take responsibility through the school council, the prefect system, mentoring of younger students by older students, particularly in reading, and various charity fundraising events. Students are sensitive to those who have different beliefs or come from different cultures and backgrounds. They have a good understanding of British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school makes sure that all students have the same opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. There is no evidence of discrimination.

- The school works well with the local authority. It takes part in training and joint ventures organised by the local authority and collaborates well with other schools in the area. The local authority has provided support for improving leadership and teaching, increasing governors' skills, and helping newly qualified teachers to settle in. It has arranged support from the headteacher of an outstanding school, who is a national leader in education, to work with the leadership and management team.
- The school makes good use of other links to extend the quality of training and support for staff. It has strong links with Derby University and is working closely with the LEAD Academy Trust to bring about more rapid improvements, particularly in leadership and management and the quality of teaching.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. The large majority of those responding to Parent View were positive about the education and care provided for their children.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are effective and meet statutory requirements. This includes child protection procedures and checks to find out any reasons why any adults appointed should not work with young people. The school works closely with providers of off-site courses to check the attendance, behaviour, safety and progress of the students who attend them.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive, but not yet fully effective. They were disappointed with the 2014 GCSE results and have made significant changes to the way they monitor and challenge leaders. Some have undergone extensive training. They have commissioned an external review of their work.
 - The governors visit the school frequently. They are gaining a greater insight into its strengths and areas for improvement, and a clearer understanding of the quality of teaching. They have received training on how to use assessment data and are able to compare the school's performance against others nationally.
 - Governors are now fully involved in discussions about teachers' performance. They are clear that pay progression is linked to the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
 - Governors monitor spending very carefully and are proud that they have turned a deficit budget into a surplus. They check that additional funding for disadvantaged students and those who need extra help in Year 7 is used effectively to bring about more rapid progress for eligible students.
 - Governors check that all required safeguarding policies are followed. They also make sure the school promotes British values of tolerance and respect.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. In some lessons, when teaching does not fully engage and challenge students some inappropriate behaviour detracts from learning and slows their progress. The clear systems for managing students' behaviour are not applied consistently by all staff. A few students told inspectors that not all staff follow the correct procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Around the school most students are polite and courteous to one another and to adults. They respond quickly to staff requests. Classrooms, outside areas and corridors are tidy and there are few examples of litter. Students told inspectors that they are proud of the new building and thought that the improved surroundings had a positive effect on the way they behave. Sixth form students provide good role models for younger students and make many positive contributions to the school community.
- Attendance has improved this year, but is still below the national average. The school has done much to raise parents' awareness of the importance of regular attendance. It employs an attendance officer, who works with families of students at risk of becoming persistent absentees. As a result the number of persistent absentees is falling, but it is still above the national average. There is still a gap, albeit closing, between the attendance of disadvantaged students and others.
- School data show that the incidents of unacceptable behaviour are reducing. The numbers of fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions are also reducing. However, these are still above average. The

school is making good use of the LEAP programme, which provides work-related courses, to successfully support students close to exclusion.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students told inspectors that they feel the school cares for them well, and this view was supported by most parents who responded to Parent View. Students are confident that they know who to go to if they have problems, and value the good advice that the school gives them on how to stay safe.
- Students say they are given helpful information through assemblies and tutor time on how to stay healthy, about the dangers of misuse of alcohol and drugs, and about the problems that occur through gangs and knife crime. They are clear about how to stay safe on the internet.
- Students are aware of the different kinds of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. They say bullying is rare but when it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by the staff.
- Students understand about what constitutes extremist behaviour and show a high level of respect for different faiths and cultures. They are clear about the need to promote British values of tolerance and respect, and value the way the school represents different cultures.
- The school works well with the providers of off-site courses to monitor the safety, attendance and behaviour of students.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough. As a result students do not make sufficient progress.
- The quality of teaching varies across subjects. There are still too many lessons where teachers do not use current assessment information to make sure that activities are set at the right level to challenge and engage different abilities of students so that they all successfully move on to the next level of learning. This is particularly true for the most able students.
- Students' enthusiasm and interest in learning vary depending on the subject and the teacher. Students are very enthusiastic to learn when lessons are well planned and teachers use their good subject knowledge to engage them. However, when work is not at the right level of difficulty, either too hard for some or too easy for others, students find it difficult to stay focused. At such times they lose concentration and distract others.
- Leaders have introduced a whole-school policy for literacy. This includes a considerable focus on improving students' reading skills, with greater emphasis in lessons on allowing time for students to read out loud. There is also a focus on encouraging students to use correct subject-specific terminology, and feeding back to students on how to improve writing skills. This is having a positive impact on improving students' literacy skills and their progress in English. There is no similar policy to promote numeracy across the school. Students are not given enough opportunities to practise their numeracy skills or use them to solve problems in different subjects.
- Much has been done to improve the quality and consistency of feedback to students. Leaders have introduced a school-wide marking policy. Students are now receiving helpful information on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. As a result students' achievement is improving. Students told inspectors that marking is much better and they are pleased that homework is now set and marked regularly.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed. They work effectively alongside teachers and play a key role in providing well-targeted support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result these students make good progress. Increasingly, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution

to the learning of disadvantaged students and those who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, the progress of these students is improving and gaps between them and other students are narrowing.

- Teaching is improving, particularly in the sixth form. In some lessons teachers provide demanding and interesting work, which builds on students' previous learning and fully engages their interest. In a Year 7 science lesson on chemical reactions, the teacher had planned a variety of experiments for students to work through. They carefully recorded their observations of different reactions, used their numeracy skills well to take measurements and were expertly guided by the teacher to investigate and discuss their ideas. The students responded well to the teacher's high expectations and probing questions and made good progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form has improved since the previous inspection, but there are still inconsistencies within and across subjects. In some lessons work is not challenging enough for more able students. As a result they do not make the amount of progress they should.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In 2014, too many students did not make the progress that they should in English, mathematics and science. The proportion attaining five A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, was well below the national average and showed a decline from 2013. This was, in part, due to the number of students who were following vocational courses which in 2013, if successfully completed, counted as GCSE grade C passes. However, this changed in 2014 and these work-related courses did not have the same value. In addition, a number of students were entered for three separate sciences. These courses were not matched closely enough to the students' abilities.
- In the current Year 10 and Year 11, the students are following courses that provide more appropriate academic qualifications. The number of students taking three separate sciences has been reduced and there is a better match between students' abilities and science courses they are following. As a result, current assessments and work seen in books, show that students' progress is improving at a faster rate across a number of subjects. The proportion of students expected to gain five A*-C passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, in 2015 is set to rise considerably.
- The proportion of students who made or exceeded nationally expected progress in 2014 was below average in English and well below in mathematics. The proportion gaining a grade C or better in English and mathematics were also well below average. Since then teaching has improved, tracking information is being used more effectively to identify students who need extra help, and students are receiving better feedback on how to improve their work. These changes have brought about increasingly rapid progress in English. Progress is also improving in mathematics, but to a lesser degree.
- The most able students do not achieve their full potential because they are not always given challenging work. Not enough reach the higher grades in GCSE examinations. Current information shows that their progress is improving and more of these students in Year 11 are working at the higher grades.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students is below that of others in the school and nationally. In 2014, in English they were almost half a GCSE grade behind their classmates, and close to two thirds of a grade behind students nationally. In mathematics, the gaps were just under two thirds of a grade and one and a third grades respectively. School assessments and work seen in books show that the gaps in both subjects in the current Years 10 and 11 are narrowing, particularly in English. The progress of disadvantaged students is improving and gaps in progress narrowing. This is because they receive better support than in the past. School data show that the gap is also narrowing across all other years, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make progress that is in line with their peers and in some cases better, because of the additional support they are given.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the

additional, individual support they are given in and out of class by well-qualified teaching assistants.

- The progress of Year 7 students eligible for additional help with reading as part of the government's 'catch-up' funding is now at least good. The school's focus on reading and writing across subjects, plus additional one-to-one support, is helping these students catch up to their classmates.
- The school entered some students early for GCSE mathematics in 2014. In the current Year 11, 120 students have been entered early for GCSE English Literature. The school's reason for this is so that these students can concentrate more fully on improving their standards in English Language. The school does not intend to do this in the future.
- Assessment information, students' work and observations of lessons support the school's evaluation that students are making better progress this year in many subjects.
- Students who study work-related courses off-site make similar progress to others in school.
- Achievement in the sixth form is improving, but progress still varies too much across different subjects.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the sixth form have been strengthened by the appointment of a new head of sixth form. Significant changes have been made to the systems that check students' progress and trigger additional support for any students who fall behind with their work.
- Students told inspectors that they appreciate the support they get and the quality of careers information and guidance. The vast majority of students who complete their courses go on to study at universities of their choice, or opt to take up apprenticeships or employment.
- The new head of sixth form is revising the range of courses that are offered to encourage more students to follow academic subjects. Students have not always been advised to take the correct courses and the proportion staying on from Year 12 to Year 13 has been below the national average. More advice is now being given to students entering Year 12 so that they are able to make better informed choices at the start of the sixth form. The proportion staying on is now closer to the national average. Students who enter the sixth form without at least a grade C at GCSE for English or mathematics are given extra support to enable them to retake the examinations. However, the success rate of these students has been low.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Results in 2014 show an improvement on previous years for students following the academic A-level courses, with all students gaining A* to E across all subjects. However, although the proportion of students gaining A* to B rose, it was still below the national average. There was a decline in the proportion of students gaining good passes in work-related courses. At AS level, although there have been improvements, students do not make consistently good progress. Disadvantaged students perform similarly to their peers. The sixth form meets the national 16 to 19 interim minimum standards.
- Teaching in the sixth form is improving, but there is too much variation in the quality across and within subjects. As a result, students do not make good or better progress in all subjects.
- Students' behaviour around the school and their attitudes to learning are very positive, and they provide good role models for younger students. They contribute to the school's activities through the student council, working as prefects, mentoring younger students and acting as ambassadors at different school events. Students are given good advice on how to stay safe in various situations.

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	112992
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	453717

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
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	1157
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Larkins
Headteacher	Mal Kerr
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2013
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