

# Birkbeck School and Community Arts College

Keeling Street, North Somercotes, Louth, LN11 7PN

**Inspection dates** 3–4 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	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.

- Governors, leaders and managers have not brought about the improvements needed that were identified by the last inspection. Standards of attainment are lower than they were then.
- Weaknesses in teaching and subject leadership have not been tackled effectively to prevent students from underachieving, particularly in mathematics and humanities.
- Leaders' monitoring of the work of departments and their checks on the impact of spending for disadvantaged students have not been rigorous enough.
- Some parents and staff do not have confidence in the leadership of the school and the quality of education it provides.
- As a result of weak teaching in mathematics, history, geography, languages and religious education, students have made insufficient progress. Too often, the tasks teachers set in lessons in these subjects are repetitive and fail to capture students' interest.
- There is not enough good teaching or effective marking across the school, and the most effective practice is not widely shared. Books are not always marked and students are not routinely given clear advice on how to improve their work.
- The work set for students is rarely challenging, particularly for the most-able students. Many teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low.
- Students are not equipped with the basic mathematical skills they need to prepare them for the next stage of their education or the world of work.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students in mathematics is well below that of other groups, and the gap is not closing quickly enough.
- Students do not have consistently good attitudes to learning. While some work hard and are keen to learn, some of their work is of poor quality, unfinished and poorly presented.

### The school has the following strengths

- In this orderly community, the caring, nurturing environment for all students, particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, ensures that students feel very safe.
- Students enjoy learning in some subjects such as English, media, computing, catering, music and art. They do better in these than the other subjects they study.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons being taught to full classes and smaller groups of students of all ages and in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English. The headteacher and lead inspector made several shorter visits to classrooms together.
- Discussions were held with parents, students, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at students’ books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- The 68 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, as well as those from the school’s own parental surveys and from 23 school staff.

## Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Rowe	Additional Inspector
Stephen Hopkins	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

- This is a below-average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is about 27%, which is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, at about 30%, is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- A well above-average proportion of students join the school partway through their secondary education.
- The school meets 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.
- The school does not use any alternative provision involving off-site education for students. It has its own 'Access Centre' to provide temporary support for students who find learning in mainstream classes difficult.
- The school operates within an area where some students are selected to attend grammar schools.
- An assistant headteacher took over the leadership of mathematics in January and a new leader of languages had been in post for two weeks at the time of the inspection.

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

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics and humanities, by:
  - giving students challenging work that takes full account of their ability levels and moving them on quickly to more difficult tasks as soon as they are ready
  - insisting on high-quality layout and presentation of work in students' books
  - marking books regularly, giving clear pointers on how students can improve their work, and making sure that students act on the advice given
  - broadening the range of teaching methods and resources used and explaining the relevance of work set in order to engage the interest of students
  - sharing the most effective practice within the school in teaching, marking and feedback to students.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
  - rigorously monitoring the work of departments and the quality of teaching
  - tackling weaknesses identified in leadership and teaching quickly and thoroughly
  - carefully checking the spending of additional funding to support disadvantaged students to ensure it is effective in raising achievement, particularly in mathematics
  - working more closely with parents and staff to seek and respond to their views on the quality of education the school provides.

An external review of governance, including 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

- Leaders and managers have not been successful in creating a climate in which good teaching and consistently good attitudes to learning can flourish. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Governors and senior leaders have not been quick enough to tackle weaknesses, particularly in mathematics and humanities, or to ensure that the quality of teaching and subject leadership are strong enough to support good achievement across the school.
- Senior leaders have not monitored the work of departments sufficiently closely to ensure that, for example, assessments of students' attainment are always accurate and that books are marked regularly. They have monitored teaching but, until recently, their judgements on its quality have been overgenerous. The management of teachers' performance has not been strong enough to eliminate inadequate teaching. Although the management of teachers' performance is now becoming more effective, teachers have not been held to account sufficiently for the progress of their students.
- The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Leaders have identified priorities for improving the school but are not well placed to achieve them because of remaining weaknesses in the leadership of key subjects. There is considerable variability in the impact of subject leaders in monitoring and improving performance in their areas of responsibility. Weaknesses in the leadership of mathematics, history, geography, religious education and languages have meant that students' progress has not been accurately and rigorously monitored and students have underachieved. The new leaders of mathematics and languages have not yet had time to have an impact on students' achievement in their subjects.
- The school does not promote equality of opportunity effectively, as there are gaps in achievement between different groups of students. The spending of pupil premium funding is not monitored closely enough to ensure that it is effective in closing the large gaps that exist in mathematics between disadvantaged and other students. The most-able students are not challenged sufficiently in all subjects to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.
- The local authority has recently increased its support for the school. This has involved giving valuable advice on assessing the quality of teaching and on leadership issues, and support and training for the English and mathematics departments.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. Staff are well trained and have a good awareness of, for example, risk assessments and child protection procedures.
- The curriculum is sufficiently broad, within this small school, to provide opportunities for students to study a range of academic and work-related courses and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. It allows students to develop good basic skills in English, but this is not the case in mathematics. This means that students are not well prepared for the next steps in life.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities, which students enjoy. They speak enthusiastically about drama productions in which they have taken part, overseas visits to war graves and trips to a sculpture park.
- Students are given appropriate advice about future careers and further education. They are well informed about employment opportunities and courses available at local schools and colleges. As a result, a broadly average proportion of students go on to employment, training or further education.
- Students develop a clear awareness of British values, including respect and understanding for those who are from different faiths and cultures. The school does not tolerate discrimination or prejudice, and it fosters good relationships between all groups of students. Assemblies use parables, such as that of the Good Samaritan, to successfully raise students' awareness of the needs of others. In assembly, many students spoke of how they give up their free time to help charities and disabled young people.

■ The responses to Parent View and the staff questionnaire suggest that governors and senior leaders do not work closely enough with parents and all staff to seek and respond to their views about the quality of education provided. A significant minority of parents (28% of the 68 who responded) say they would not recommend the school to others. A majority of the 23 staff questionnaires returned indicated a lack of confidence in the leadership of the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is inadequate because, despite their efforts, governors have not been able to tackle weaknesses rapidly enough to prevent underachievement, especially in mathematics. Governors have not evaluated the school's performance, particularly students' performance data, rigorously enough.
- Governors know some of the weaknesses in the quality of teaching but have not been able to eliminate inadequate teaching and weak leadership in some subjects. Although school finance has otherwise been managed effectively, governors have not monitored the spending of the pupil premium sufficiently closely to ensure it has been effective. However, they know how good performance by teachers is to be rewarded and that underperformance is being tackled more effectively this year.
- Governors make sure that the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures are effective.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils**

**requires improvement**

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Work in some students' books shows that they do not have positive attitudes to learning in all subjects. Work is sometimes incomplete or very brief and of poor quality. In some subjects, work is poorly presented and is not clearly or consistently titled and dated.
- In lessons, most students are keen to succeed. However, some lose concentration and can disrupt learning, particularly when work is repetitive and does not engage their interest.
- Students behave well as they move around the school. Most are aware of others and show respect to each other and to staff and visitors. Students are punctual and arrive dressed in the correct school uniform and equipped for learning.
- Records show that incidents of challenging behaviour, including bullying, are relatively rare and that they are swiftly and effectively dealt with.
- The school's 'Access Centre' provides well for students who need extra support and for those who find working in mainstream classes difficult. The personal support provided for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and for students who are vulnerable, is particularly strong. The school works closely with outside agencies, including therapists, to ensure that students get specialist help when this is needed.
- Attendance is below average. However, it is improving due to the school's determined efforts to work with students and their parents to make them aware of the importance of regular attendance. The number of persistent absences is also reducing and is now much closer to average.
- Students willingly embrace opportunities to take responsibility. They are proud to be prefects, to be members of the school council and to act as ambassadors for their school. Most students cooperate well when working in pairs or groups, especially when organising events and fundraising for different charities.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All staff give this aspect of students' education a high priority, and consistently follow the school's clear policies and procedures. The school thoroughly checks the suitability of staff to work with students. The site is kept secure. Visitors are carefully checked in and students are able to identify them clearly by the badges that they wear.
- Students say they feel very safe in school and the vast majority of parents agree with this view. Students

understand that there are different types of bullying but are confident that staff will deal effectively with any bullying that may arise.

- Students know how to keep themselves and their friends safe. They have a sensible attitude to taking risks and are well aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. They are knowledgeable about staying safe when using the internet and social media.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **is inadequate**

- The quality of teaching varies across subjects and age groups, and too much is inadequate. Consequently, students, including the most able and those that are disadvantaged, do not make the progress of which they are capable in all subjects.
- Work in students' books in mathematics, geography, history, religious education and languages shows that, as a result of weak teaching over time, students are underachieving. In some books, work has not been marked. In others, marking does not give students clear guidance on how to improve their work and, even when this is made clear, the students have not always acted upon it.
- In some subjects, students do not learn enough in lessons and are not moved on to more difficult work when they are ready for it. In mathematics, students often complete repeated examples of the same type of calculation and are not moved on to new work quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always take account of the full range of ability in the class. In some lessons, students struggle to understand the meaning of, for example, key mathematical terms because these have not been explained sufficiently clearly and teachers have not checked that students have fully understood them. Because teachers' expectations of their students are often low they set work that is too easy and does not challenge students to achieve their best. The most-able students are rarely given work that fully extends their skills and deepens their understanding. In a geography lesson observed, students' understanding of earthquakes was limited because they spent too much time colouring in diagrams rather than exploring the topic more deeply.
- Often the range of resources used and the tasks set are not sufficiently interesting or relevant to capture students' interest, so their learning slows. Where tasks are stimulating, such as those seen in English, computing, art and textile lessons, students are focused on their work and enjoy learning.
- Staff give skilled help to any students who need to improve the fluency of their reading, and many are successfully encouraged to read for pleasure. Students often make good progress in literacy because tasks are interesting, work is carefully marked and they are given precise feedback on how to take the next steps in their learning. However, these features are not shared sufficiently widely across the school to help raise standards in subjects where students are underachieving.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are sufficiently well supported in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants to enable them to grow in confidence and complete the same or similar work to their peers.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **is inadequate**

- Students' progress varies between subjects, and their work in books and results in examinations show that achievement in mathematics, humanities and languages is inadequate. Students have considerable gaps in their knowledge in mathematics. They are not equipped with the basic mathematical skills needed for further education or employment. This was clearly illustrated when a group of Year 11 students did not have the skills, confidence or knowledge to divide 151 by eight.
- Students start at the school with standards that are below average. At the end of Year 11, for the last three years, the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics has been below average. In 2014, only 40% of students gained this standard.

- In English, attainment at GCSE in 2014 was close to the national average. The proportion of students making expected progress was above that found nationally, although the proportion exceeding expected progress was below. In mathematics, attainment was below national averages and the proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress were well below those found nationally.
- Students make expected or better progress in English, media, catering, music, computing and art.
- In English GCSE examinations in 2014, disadvantaged students were, on average, just under half a grade behind their peers in school and just over half a grade behind other students nationally. In mathematics, the attainment gap was much wider, and they were almost a grade behind their classmates in school and a grade and a half behind students nationally. While the gap between the proportion of students making expected progress and others is narrow in English, it remains very wide in mathematics and is not closing quickly enough.
- The most-able students do not make fast enough progress because they are not given work that extends and deepens their understanding. In 2014, very few students reached the highest grades in GCSE examinations. The school no longer enters students early for examinations.
- Most of the disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and students who join the school partway through their secondary education, make similarly inconsistent progress between subjects to their peers. However, some of these students make faster progress because they receive good personal, individual support which helps to build their confidence and accelerate their learning.

## 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>	120653
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	453608

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>	267
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Grantham and Graham Stark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynda Dobson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 March 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01507 358352
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