

The Bramcote School

Derby Road, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3GD

Inspection dates 21–22 April 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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not all leaders and managers are checking students' work and progress regularly or thoroughly enough to identify and overcome weaknesses in teaching and achievement.
- Overall, students do not make good progress throughout the school because some teaching is not consistently good.
- Some students become restless and inattentive when teachers lack high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes to learning and set work that is too hard or too easy.
- Much of the work that students are given is not based on the detailed data the school has about their prior attainment. Consequently, pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able, are not challenged enough to make good progress.
- Much marking does not tell students how to improve their work, which makes it harder for them to make good progress.
- Standards are not high enough, given students' starting points in Year 7.

The school has the following strengths

- It is a quickly improving school because it is led strongly by the executive headteacher. He is driving improvements in teaching and achievement securely.
- Students achieve well in English and in some other subjects, including science and modern foreign languages, where teaching is consistently good.
- The governing body knows the school well and robustly probes the quality of teaching and its impact on students' achievement.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe and feel safe in school.
- By the end of Year 11, students develop a good understanding of British values from the opportunities the school gives them to take responsibility and to participate in democratic processes.
- Students' attendance is above average so they have the opportunity to learn well academically and in their personal development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a wide range of teaching and learning. Some observations were shared with either the executive headteacher or with the head of school.
- The inspectors talked with students during break and lunch times and in lessons. They met formally with four groups of students to find out their views about their school.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, and with members of the governing body.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documentation including information about the achievement of all groups of students. They checked the school's development plan, evaluated the quality of students' work with the head of school, checked records of attendance and behaviour, and evaluated policies to help keep students safe.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took into account the 24 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), and the 46 responses in the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Beverly Clubley	Additional Inspector
Robert Steed	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than others of its type. The numbers of students are rising.
- The large majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be disadvantaged, and therefore supported through the pupil premium, is above average and increasing. The pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school is part of the White Hills Park Federation Trust, along with the Alderman White School and Language College. Directors of learning operate across the two schools.
- A very few students learn off-site at The Bridge Unit and Buxton Training.
- The school works in partnership with The Minster Teaching School Alliance to strengthen subject leadership.
- The executive headteacher took up his post in January 2014. He is Principal of both the schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and quickens the rate of students' progress by making sure that:
 - all students, particularly the most able, have work that is based accurately on data about their prior achievement, so they are well challenged and learn successfully
 - teachers' marking tells students how to improve their work so they learn and achieve more
 - all teachers have high expectations that students will behave well and have positive attitudes to learning, and every teacher uses the school's behaviour policy consistently to ensure better learning.
- Increase the impact of leaders at all levels on improving teaching and achievement by:
 - checking, regularly and in detail, the quality of teaching, students' work and achievement
 - acting on their findings rapidly and robustly to improve the quality of teaching and students' rate of progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Not all students learn well because teaching, especially in mathematics, has been too variable over time to enable them to do so. Leaders and managers do not check progress regularly enough or in sufficient detail to identify and address weaknesses in teaching and in students' work.
- The executive headteacher, supported by the head of school, has applied much better systems to check teaching and the school's work. He has restructured the senior leadership team to be more effective in driving improvements forward. Improved collection and interpretation of data describing students' progress is at the heart of the school's efforts to improve achievement rapidly. New systems are used to assess attainment and monitor progress. Consequently, better progress is evident in some subjects.
- Data about students' progress is collected regularly. Leaders and class teachers have responsibility for analysing it and tackling any weaknesses in what they find. However, senior and other leaders' checks on the quality of students' learning and current work are still not having the full impact intended on improving teaching and learning. Detailed findings are lacking and leaders have not picked up all the weaknesses in teaching and learning that are a barrier to quicker progress.
- The senior leader responsible for disadvantaged students is doing a good job in ensuring their needs are met. Their rates of progress are improving as a consequence. Leaders are careful to make sure the students who are identified as disabled or who have special educational needs have accurate assessment of their needs, and that those identified do not include others who have been underachieving for other reasons.
- Most significantly, the executive headteacher has tackled staffing weaknesses rigorously. He has made hard decisions in order to improve teaching and students' achievement. As a result, progress is quickening and is good in English. A school culture is being established in which the quality of teaching and a more positive response from students to their learning are expected. However, this central purpose has not yet been fully achieved.
- Partnerships with other schools are proving helpful in accelerating the rate of students' progress, including in mathematics. Parents are valued partners and are increasingly involved with the school through forums about behaviour and homework organised by a senior leader.
- Directors of learning, who work across the federation, are making a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Teaching is observed regularly and helpful training and support are provided for those who need to strengthen their practice. As a result, teaching in some subjects is good.
- Teachers' performance targets are carefully chosen to improve their practice. Demanding goals are set that teachers must achieve in order to get a pay rise. The staff receive regular training to build up their skills. They support the school's drive to improve and, consequently, teaching is improving in some subjects.
- The curriculum provides many learning opportunities through the federation. The school does not tolerate discrimination towards students so, for example, students who learn on other sites are supported and put on courses that match their needs well. The school ensures students learn broadly, including their responsibilities as citizens, careers guidance and financial skills.
- The new curriculum is being implemented on time, with courses chosen to ensure it provides balance. Students know a lot about British values because they form the basis of the school's ethos and are incorporated into much learning. Pupils are suitably well prepared for life in modern Britain. Overall, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is supported appropriately, with cultural understanding a developing area of the school's work.
- Students are informed well about their subject options for Key Stage 4 and their post-16 and careers choices. They appreciate the preparation they get for employment through job interviews and writing

curriculum vitae. However, due the variability in the quality of teaching, the school cannot ensure that all students reach their potential and have equal chances of success.

- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements. Arrangements include the safety of those students learning off-site, whose attendance, punctuality and behaviour are checked rigorously. Vulnerable students are well supported and cared for. Some of them have gained in confidence from the good support of the school and their achievement has improved considerably.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body supports the school effectively. Governors have more impact than at the last inspection because they have reviewed their practice and extended their knowledge and skills.
- The governors understand data on students' attainment and progress. They challenge the school well about achievement and the variations between subjects.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and of students' performance. Consequently, they have clear direction to ensure school improvement and good understanding of how to get there.
- The governors find out for themselves how well the school is doing through their individual responsibilities and the reports they receive from directors of learning.
- Governors have good involvement in the daily life of the school, including attending the weekly heads of school meeting as an observer.
- Governors understand the importance of performance management in improving teaching and do not agree to pay rises unless individual teachers have met all targets set for them.
- The governors check finance regularly and make sure money is spent to positive effect. They talk confidently of the uses and impact of pupil premium funding and check regularly that the achievement of this group of students continues to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A small minority of students are inattentive and behave immaturely in lessons where teaching is less effective. This results in both they and other students learning too slowly. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of how students should behave. Teachers do not all follow school policy to manage behaviour in the same way so that students know what is expected of them.
- Many students demonstrate very positive attitudes to school and learning. They like their school and say that it is improving quickly under the executive headteacher. They say that he has very high expectations of them and listens to their views.
- Students who learn off-site have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour has improved.
- Students are proud of the numerous responsibilities with which they are entrusted, such as being sports leaders, peer mediators and members of the school or federation council. They respect the democratic principles on which the councils are run and the opportunity given them to have a voice in contributing to the school's future.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students, including those who are educated at other sites and vulnerable students, are well cared for.
- The students and their parents say the school is a safe place and keeps students safe.
- Although there is a little bullying, the school acts very swiftly to stop it. The students say that assemblies and lessons constantly reiterate that bullying is wrong, why it is wrong and helps them to deal with it.

- Students show a good understanding for their age of the potential dangers facing them, including from using social media. A wide-ranging programme of guidance has ensured they know the risks brought about by issues such as extremism and radicalisation. They understand that all should be treated equally and prejudice based on appearance, sexual orientation or race should be challenged.
- Attendance rates are above average, helped by effective systems to check and reward good attendance.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is variable throughout the school so students do not make good progress by the end of Year 11 in all subjects. This is because there are great differences in teaching quality between and within subjects.
- Some teachers have high expectations of how students should apply themselves to learning, to which students respond well. However, a few teachers do not expect enough of students' attitudes to learning or their work and effort, including the presentation of work.
- Although staff have assessment information about the levels at which students should be working, they do not always use it to provide challenging work for all students, including the most able. Some students, therefore, lose concentration and interest in the work and their progress slows.
- Marking is variable in its helpfulness in promoting students' progress because it is inconsistent in telling them how to improve what they do.
- The most-able students do not learn as well as they can. Teachers' questioning and the tasks students are given do not encourage them to develop the skills and understanding necessary to enable them to attain the highest grades.
- Literacy, including reading, is promoted well in a majority of lessons, including in mathematics and health and social care. Students are increasingly familiar with technical vocabulary in different subjects. The development of numeracy skills in other subjects, however, is at an early stage of development. The teaching of mathematics overall requires improvement.
- Teaching is improving because senior leaders provide coaching and training to strengthen teachers' practice. There is some effective teaching which results in students making quick progress in several subjects. For example, students in Year 8 learned well in science because teaching about the rock cycle encouraged their interest and involvement by using chocolate to demonstrate the cycle. Questioning and a range of interesting resources enabled students to make quick progress in their understanding of the cycle.
- Students like and respect their teachers. They forge good relationships which help them to become more confident in participating in learning. Students with English as an additional language make good progress because of these good relationships and the well-planned support they are given.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs generally develop more secure skills because teaching assistants focus on specific skills that need strengthening.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement, particularly in mathematics, for disadvantaged students and for those with special educational needs.
- Not enough students make good progress because of the variability of teaching throughout the school and differing expectations of the staff of students' learning and their behaviour.
- Standards are improving by the end of Year 11. In 2014, the proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, was below average. This year it is on track to be in line with the national average for 2014.

- In English, there has been a big improvement since the last inspection because teaching of it has improved significantly. Standards are on-track, currently, to be above average, demonstrating students' good progress.
- Standards in mathematics declined after the last inspection and have been well-below average for two years. The school's decisive actions have led to a greater proportion of Year 11 students being on-track to make expected progress compared to last year and getting much closer to standards nationally.
- Standards are set to rise year-on-year according to the school's latest data in English, mathematics and several other subjects. Students learn consistently well in, for example, modern foreign languages, science, physical education and information and communication technology. Standards are rising this year in history and religious studies, where results have recently shown some inconsistency.
- At Key Stage 3, students make expected progress overall from their average starting points at the start of Year 7.
- Those students who have not reached the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of primary school receive specific help through 'catch-up funding' in reading, writing and mathematics. Most Year 7 students have, currently, met the required standard in English. Just over half have achieved it in mathematics, demonstrating the continuing variability in mathematics teaching and support.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make variable progress over time because support does not always accurately reflect their specific weaknesses. Their progress is close to the national average in English. It is below average in mathematics.
- Students who speak English as an additional language achieve well because they are supported very well in their learning. The standards they reach are above average and they make quicker progress in English and mathematics than other groups in the school.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is improving because the school now knows their needs accurately and has a fitting programme of academic and pastoral support for them. This is in contrast to the previous three-year widening gap in English and mathematics standards and progress between those supported by the funding and those not.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students were a grade behind other students in the school in English by the end of Year 11, and behind other students nationally by just under a grade. In mathematics, they were behind other students in the school by a grade and a half and behind other students nationally by close to two grades. The gap between the progress made by disadvantaged students and other groups of students in the school narrowed in 2014, but not when compared with other students nationally.
- This year, the progress made by disadvantaged students is on track to be in line with other groups of students in the school and in line with the latest national progress comparisons.
- The most-able students do not achieve well overall. Their work does not challenge them with regular opportunities to analyse, evaluate and apply what they know. This makes it harder for them to reach their potential. However, in modern foreign languages, the most able students achieve well because much is expected of them and teaching takes account of individual students' needs.
- There is some early entry into GCSE examinations, such as in core science and English literature, but the school ensures that students resit if the first entry does not reflect their potential.
- Students who learn off-site make at least expected progress in their learning. Some make good progress in improving their behaviour, attendance and social skills.
- Most students go on to sixth form or further education, or go into training.

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	138837
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	461981

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Launchbury
Executive Headteacher	Paul Heery (Executive Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	09 May 2013
Telephone number	0115 9130013
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