

Devizes School

The Green, Devizes, SN10 3AG

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher is ably supported by senior leaders. They work well together as a team to accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for development. Teachers are now held to account for students' progress and consequently achievement is now good.
- Effective action has been taken to address inadequate teaching in mathematics. The 2014 dip in mathematics GCSE results has been rectified and students are now achieving well.
- Teaching is good across the curriculum. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help students to increase their understanding and to make good progress.
- The school's curriculum provides opportunities for students to study subjects which are well suited to their needs, aspirations and talents. Students are well prepared for the next steps in their education, training or employment.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Relationships between all members of the school's community are strong. The school is a calm and supportive place in which to learn.
- Students' behaviour around the school is good. Students are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. The absence of litter and graffiti demonstrates students' pride in their school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students feel safe at school and this view is endorsed by parents and staff.
- Governance is effective. Governors monitor the work of school leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching and for students' progress.
- The sixth form is well led and managed. Teaching is good in the sixth form, and outcomes for sixth form students are good in most subjects.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking and feedback do not always help students to become sufficiently secure in what they are learning to make rapid progress.
- Not all teachers provide opportunities for students to reflect on advice given, and therefore to extend or improve their work.
- In mathematics, some teaching does not enable students to develop a deep understanding of the subject. This is because insecure or incomplete knowledge is sometimes not identified accurately enough.
- Not all teaching in the sixth form fully enables students to develop the skills necessary for higher education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 40 lessons to observe students' learning and behaviour, and to evaluate the impact of teachers' marking on students' progress. Most of these lessons were observed jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted a number of shorter visits to lessons to observe the work of teaching assistants in classrooms.
- A separate scrutiny of sixth form students' work was conducted.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, groups of students from different year groups and with the Chair of Governors. An inspector also observed part of a governors' committee meeting.
- A telephone conversation was held with the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to other aspects of the school's work. This included the school's self-evaluation, development plans for the school, records of students' achievement and behaviour, attendance records and the school's policies for child protection and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour around the school site, between lessons, and during social times.
- Inspectors took account of the 69 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, one letter from a parent received during the inspection, and the school's own survey of the views of parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 110 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for members of staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Phillip Grundy	Additional Inspector
James Rouse	Additional Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Devizes School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2012. When its predecessor school, also called Devizes School, was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2012, it was judged to be good.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- A small number of students attend alternative education off site at Springfields Academy, Wiltshire College, New College and Swindon College.
- The school has received support from a National Leader of Education (NLE) for development and improvement in mathematics.
- 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 current headteacher retires at the end of this academic year. The deputy headteacher will act as interim headteacher until a substantive headteacher is appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress made by students in mathematics by ensuring that all teachers accurately identify students who have insecure or incomplete understanding and then plan work that enables them to deepen their knowledge..
- Ensure that all teaching in the sixth form enables students to develop the skills necessary for higher education.
- Further improve achievement by ensuring that:
 - all teachers' marking and feedback consistently and precisely identify the steps students need to take to understand how their work can be improved
 - all teachers provide opportunities for students to reflect and act on the advice given to improve their work or make it more detailed.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has developed a confident and capable senior leadership team. They work very well together to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. The deputy headteacher is well placed to take over the interim headship of the school in September 2015.
- The school's view of its effectiveness at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is accurate. Leaders understand the impact that the very poor mathematics GCSE results in 2014 had on the whole-school performance. They have taken effective action to address the inadequate teaching in mathematics and to restructure teaching groups so that students are supported well to make up lost ground. Achievement in mathematics for students currently on roll is improving and progress is now good.
- The school's procedures for managing staff performance are strong and ensure that pay progression is only awarded when the quality of teaching secures good outcomes for students. Training for staff is well matched to the school's development priorities and enables the sharing of good practice. Consequently, teaching across the curriculum is good.
- Middle leadership has been strengthened through the formation of the school's faculty and house systems. It is now strong and effective. Subject leaders routinely evaluate the work of their departments and have good understanding of the impact of teaching on students' progress. Effective action is taken to address any teaching that is not good enough.
- Pastoral leaders track and monitor students' behaviour and attendance very well. They carefully identify where students are underachieving and take action to involve parents in supporting their children to engage with learning. Attendance is improving and the use of fixed term exclusions has fallen significantly since the last inspection.
- Leaders have recognised that aspirations for all students need to be more ambitious. They have taken steps to increase expectations of students' achievement across the school. However, this strategy has yet to impact fully on enabling students to make very good progress.
- The school's systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress have been strengthened and are routinely used to identify where students are underachieving. This enables leaders to hold teachers to account for the progress of the students they teach.
- The school's curriculum is well developed and prepares students well for life in modern Britain. The range of subjects meets the needs, talents and aspirations of students well. Students who would benefit from a work-related curriculum are accurately identified. They follow courses which lead to qualifications which usefully support future employment.
- The careers information, advice and guidance provided for students are good and help them to make informed choices for their futures. Almost all students secure places in education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- The school is a calm and supportive place in which to learn. Strong relationships between all members of the school community help to ensure high levels of respect; discrimination is not accepted and diversity is appreciated.
- Equality of opportunity is well established across all aspects of the school's work and is a strong feature of the way in which students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities enables students to participate in sporting and cultural events that would not otherwise be accessible to them.
- The recent appointment of a pupil premium champion has been highly effective. Disadvantaged students are well known to all staff and interventions to accelerate their progress are now well established. Attendance and attitudes towards learning have also improved significantly and there is good parental participation in supporting these students to achieve well.
- The school uses some of its pupil premium money to remove barriers to learning caused by lack of equipment, uniform or kit for physical education lessons. Financial support is also provided to enable disadvantaged students to participate in the full range of sporting and cultural activities. This is part of the school's work to promote equality of opportunity.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to support students who fell behind with their reading and mathematical skills in primary school to make rapid improvements.
- Students have a good understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy and freedom of speech. There are frequent opportunities for students to debate moral or ethical issues and to participate in 'mock' electoral processes.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet all current statutory requirements and are effective. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection issues and therefore students at potential risk

of harm are quickly identified and safeguarded.

- There is close liaison between the school and alternative education providers. This means that students who receive part of their education off site are routinely tracked and monitored. Their attendance is good; they behave well and make good progress.
- The school's improvement partner, who is an external consultant, provides light touch support for the school which helps leaders to set appropriate targets for teachers' performance. The support from a National Leader of Education in developing and improving mathematics has enabled school leaders to improve teaching in mathematics and accelerate students' progress in the subject.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and understand the need to recruit high-quality staff. The current deputy headteacher has been appointed to act as interim headteacher. Governors have secured appropriate mentoring and support to help the process of transition in school leadership.
 - Governors have received appropriate training which they use to analyse information about students' achievement. This enables them to hold leaders to account for the progress made by students. They have a good understanding of improvements in mathematics and were supportive of the headteacher when dealing with difficult decisions about staffing.
 - Governors were involved in the development of the school's systems for managing staff performance. They evaluate the information underpinning the headteacher's recommendations for pay progression, and ensure that pay increases for teachers are only awarded when students' achievement is good enough.
 - Governors have ensured that the school meets all statutory responsibilities. They check the spending of the pupil premium and understand how it is being used to ensure equal opportunities for disadvantaged students. The school's finances are tracked and monitored. Appropriate plans are in place to recover the current deficit which has been caused through the falling number of school-aged children in the school's catchment area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students' pride in their school is evidenced by the absence of graffiti and litter around the school site. Standards of school uniform are high.
- The atmosphere at lunch and break times is calm. Students socialise in mixed groups and show respect for each other. They are punctual to lessons, moving promptly when the bell sounds to signal the end of break times. Consequently, there is a brisk start to lessons.
- Students enjoy contributing to lessons. They willingly offer their views and are able to ask for help or to question the teacher when they find the work challenging or difficult to understand. When teaching fully engages them they are keen to learn and demonstrate a thirst for knowledge.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and most students have very little or no experience of it. When bullying does take place students say that it is quickly and effectively dealt with by school staff.
- During their ethics and personal development lessons, students are taught about different faiths and the causes and impact of radicalisation and extremism. Assemblies are used well to develop students' appreciation of how different cultures can enrich society. This means that racist behaviour is rare.
- Personal development lessons provide rich opportunities for students to debate and consider a range of opinions about moral or emotive issues. Incidents of homophobic behaviour are rare.
- The majority of parents who responded to the school's surveys and to Ofsted's questionnaire believe that students are well behaved. This view was endorsed by the majority of staff.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The school site is secure, and staff on duty at break and lunch times are clearly visible to students. Students say that they feel safe when at school, a view which is endorsed by the majority of parents.
- Students are taught well about how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. They have good understanding of the risks associated with substance misuse, alcohol abuse and sexual activity. They are confident that they would be able to identify any potential grooming or 'sexting' when using social media.
- Safeguarding procedures are good. Key staff have been trained how to recognise the signs of potential

child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Students at potential risk of harm are quickly identified and safeguarded.

- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Persistent absenteeism has been significantly reduced, especially for disadvantaged students.
- Fixed term exclusions have reduced significantly and are only used for serious breaches of the school's code of conduct. The use of internal isolation and the number of incidents resulting in students being removed from lessons for poor behaviour have fallen rapidly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Relationships between students and teachers are good because they are based on mutual respect. This makes a strong contribution towards students learning well.
- Great care is taken to teach students how to structure and manage their revision and to develop the skills and knowledge they need in public examinations. Most are able to confidently answer different styles of questions in examinations. Homework is regularly set and is used well to extend or improve students' understanding of the subject matter.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to ask questions to check students' understanding well. Effective questioning also enables students to share their ideas and to consider a range of evidence. This helps them to develop and extend their work.
- Teachers plan lessons that interest and engage students in learning. Students enjoy opportunities to talk about what they are learning with their classmates and feel that this helps them to grow in confidence and to make good progress in lessons.
- Marking and feedback have been improved since the last inspection and have had a strong impact on accelerating students' progress. However, as not all advice precisely identifies the steps students need to take to improve their work, the impact of marking on students' progress is not yet consistently good across the school.
- In many subjects students are routinely required to respond to their teachers' comments and use the advice to improve or extend their work. However, this good practice is not yet applied consistently by students across the school.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved; strong action has been taken to remove any teaching that was inadequate. However, not all mathematics teachers accurately identify where students have insecure or incomplete understanding of the subject. This means that they do not always have the information to set work that would enable students to improve and deepen their mathematical skills.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for students with additional needs, which helps them to develop a secure understanding of what they are learning across the range of subjects.
- The teaching of literacy and reading across the school is also developing well. Students extend their understanding of subject-specific words well. This helps them to write in detail, to accurately evaluate a range of evidence, and to use statistical information to validate their ideas.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in English and mathematics over time is good. In 2014 the proportion of students who made the expected progress in English was above the national level, and the proportion who achieved grades A* to C in English was similar to the national level. This represents good progress for the students from standards on entry to the school in Year 7 that are typically well below those typical for their age.
- Students routinely achieve well in mathematics. In 2013, and in previous years, outcomes for students in mathematics have been similar to national levels. However, in 2014, due to specific issues related to that year group, attainment in mathematics was well below the national average. This untypical result had a disproportionate impact on the proportion of students who were shown as achieving five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics.
- Students have been very effectively supported to make up lost ground. Leaders have taken strong action to restore the position in mathematics by removing inadequate teaching and reorganising teaching groups. As a result, all students made gains of at least one GCSE grade in the half term between Easter and June. Achievement in mathematics for students currently in the school is now good.
- School information shows that students in Year 11 and Year 10 are on track to achieve well. Similar proportions to students nationally are making the expected progress in English and mathematics. The proportion likely to achieve five or more GCSE grades at A* to C this year is convincingly assessed to be

similar to average national standards.

- In 2014, disadvantaged students did not make as much progress or achieve as well as others in the school or other students nationally. On average, they were one grade behind in English and one and a half grades behind in mathematics. Compared to other students nationally, students were one and a third grades below in English and two and three quarter grades below in mathematics.
- The school's pupil premium champion has ensured very effective use of the money to raise awareness of these students and to ensure that help and support are carefully matched to their individual needs. The attendance of disadvantaged students has improved significantly and their persistent absenteeism has been dramatically reduced. This has had strong impact on accelerating their progress. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others in the school is narrowing rapidly. It has closed in Key Stage 3.
- Disadvantaged students who join the school with high Key Stage 2 attainment make very good progress and achieve higher levels than their peers in the school. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in the subjects they study. This is because the curriculum is carefully adapted to meet their needs. Some follow work-related courses off site, gaining the qualifications necessary to support future employment.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to enable students with low literacy and numerical skills to make rapid progress. Almost all work securely within Level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 7.
- Students who attend alternative provision make good progress because their courses are very well matched to their needs and talents. All move on to further education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- In 2014, most students were entered early for their GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. This did not limit the potential of the most able, as early entry helped to develop their confidence and to improve the grades they achieved. Students currently on roll are not being entered early for examinations.
- In 2014, almost all of the most able students made at least the expected progress in English and most made the expected progress in mathematics. Most achieved grades A* to C in all their subjects. The school provides additional support through a bursary scheme to help those who might find it financially difficult to otherwise remain in further education. Information provided by the school shows that the most able students currently at the school are making good progress.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students make good progress in most subjects. Achievement is very good in vocational subjects.
- Students who do not achieve GCSE grades A* to C in English and mathematics continue to study these subjects in the sixth form and are supported to retake their examinations. Almost all are successful in English. However, some do not reach the required standard in mathematics.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and some is inspirational. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use to plan work that interests and motivates students to achieve well. This has a good impact on achievement in most subjects. However, not all teaching enables students to the same extent in developing the skills necessary for higher education,
- Students enjoy being in the sixth form and attend well. The number of students joining the sixth form from Year 11 is increasing, and most Year 12 students remain for Year 13.
- Sixth form students behave very well and act as positive role models for younger students. They feel safe and secure when at school. There are good arrangements for teaching students about how to keep themselves safe, including when they leave home for the first time.
- The sixth form curriculum includes a range of academic and vocational courses. The majority of students move on to higher education and good use is made of the business mentoring programme to help students move on to employment or work-related training.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and ensures that teaching is of good quality. Nevertheless, the school's self-evaluation of the sixth form has been over generous.
- Leaders know how to support their teachers to help them develop the strategies they need to use to ensure that students gain the skills necessary for higher education.

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	138630
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	461800

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,093
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bousfield
Headteacher	Malcolm Irons
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01380724886
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