

William Allitt School

Sunnyside, Newhall, Swandicote DE11 0TL

Inspection dates

5–6 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Even with the many improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection, particularly within English, the quality of teaching is still too variable in some subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils still do not achieve as well as others in the school. In key stage 3, the gaps between these pupils and others are closing. However, at key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils make less progress than they should.
- Teachers' expectations of what most-able pupils can achieve remain too low. This means that pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, fail to learn at the levels at which they are capable. Too few make more than the expected progress or gain the highest GCSE grades.
- Not all teachers fulfil the expectations outlined in the school's assessment policy. The quality of marking and feedback that pupils receive from their teachers is too variable across the subjects they study.
- Leaders' analysis of pupils' attendance is not sharp enough. Some groups of pupils attend less well than others within the school and there is not a firm enough grasp on this issue.
- Governors have not kept a close enough eye on the way in which pupil premium funding is used. They have not challenged leaders enough about the impact these government funds are having on the pupils for whom it is intended.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has, with determination and courage, driven the improvements required so that the school is no longer judged to be an inadequate school requiring special measures.
- The chair of the governing body has stood shoulder to shoulder with the headteacher and has played a pivotal role in bringing about improvements to the school.
- Under difficult circumstances, leaders have ensured a clean and stimulating learning environment for pupils.
- There is some very strong teaching within the school, particularly within English. An excitement is building about teaching and learning and teachers are now proudly sharing teaching strategies and taking part in coaching in order to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Pupils are well cared for and well supported. They receive particularly effective help when making decisions about their future education, career or training.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the governing body holds leaders rigorously to account for pupil premium spending, checks that it is used effectively and makes sure that it supports improved achievement of those pupils entitled to this government funding.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - eradicating the inconsistencies that exist in the quality of teaching across and within subjects
 - ensuring that the school's assessment policy is consistently applied by all teachers so that all pupils receive meaningful feedback about their work
 - raising teachers' expectations of what most-able pupils can achieve and making sure that learning is planned at the correct level.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - leaders effectively track and monitor the attendance of individuals and groups of pupils and take action to make sure that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attend school regularly
 - more pupils make more than the expected progress and achieve the very highest grades at GCSE across a range of subjects
 - disadvantaged pupils, particularly higher-ability disadvantaged pupils, make the same progress as others within the school and achieve as well as all pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The current headteacher inherited the judgement made at the previous inspection. She joined the school in April 2014. Much work has been done and difficult decisions have been taken to ensure a positive culture for pupils and staff. During the inspection, it was clear that a majority of leaders and teachers now have a sense of ambition for their pupils, want to discuss and share ideas about teaching and are beginning to feel proud about their school. In spite of the many difficulties, the headteacher, governors and other leaders have been successful in ensuring that the culture within the school is no longer inadequate.
- Leadership and management require improvement, because the quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the curriculum and within individual subject areas. This means that pupils achieve less well in some of their classes than others.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than others, particularly at key stage 4. Leaders have not made sure that pupil premium spending is having the impact it must to ensure that these pupils make the same progress as all pupils nationally. An external review of pupil premium spending is planned and will be undertaken as part of the school-to-school support provided by Queen Elizabeth Grammar School.
- The leadership of pupils' attendance requires improvement. Leaders do not examine well enough information about the attendance of pupils and groups of pupils. This means that not enough is quickly done to improve the attendance of some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- The quality of subject leadership is inconsistent. There are some talented subject leaders, some of whom are new in this role. But not all leaders conscientiously check that teachers adhere to school policies and ensure that high expectations and standards are maintained. Senior leaders are aware of this issue and have plans in place to address this.
- In recent years, teachers' predictions about pupils' attainment have not been accurate and information about pupils' progress has not been well enough understood. Leaders now have a data and tracking system in place, and this is used well by the majority of teachers. This system is used to set pupils' targets and to make sure that they are on track. Leaders recognise that the information entered into this system lacks ambition and that some pupils' targets are not set high enough. Plans are in place to address this issue.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is a growing strength of the school. Leaders have implemented the 'William Allitt way' in order to provide clarity for teachers and pupils as to what are the non-negotiables of learning. Many classes are purposeful and orderly as a result, although inconsistencies remain.
- A rigorous performance management system is now in place, and teachers are aware of their performance targets and how success will be judged. Leaders and teachers benefit from a comprehensive programme of professional development. Teachers regularly share their good practice with peers and work together to improve. A buzz about learning is discernible.
- The school's curriculum is well thought out, and responds to pupils' needs and interests. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that all pupils develop the skills for a successful life. The 'Opening Minds' programme is an aspect of the curriculum that leaders are particularly proud of and that pupils enjoy. There is a wide range of additional classes to broaden and extend pupils' interests. Pupils are heavily involved in their community and opportunities exist for travel to other countries.
- The additional funding intended to help Year 7 pupils who did not achieve a level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been spent wisely and there has been improvement in these pupils' skills.
- Leaders carefully select and monitor the progress and welfare of the pupils studying outside of the school in alternative provision. The pupils who are studying outside of the school are doing well.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. There are clear and strategic plans in place to improve the school further. These plans can easily be monitored to assess the impact of key actions. Those responsible for making things happen are clearly identified.
- Pupils are given good advice and guidance to help them make informed choices about their future training, studies or employment. The quality of this provision is a strength of the school. It is highly valued by pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are embedded in the

curriculum. Many opportunities are afforded for high-quality displays to promote issues or stimulate pupils' interest.

- The external support that the school has received has had impact. Leaders have particularly benefited from the human resources support from the local authority. The support provided by Hasland Hall Community School is effective. The funded support from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School is high quality and is good.
- **Governance of the school**
 - The chair of the governing body provides good support to the school. He has shown true dedication and skill. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what is needed to address these.
 - An external review of governance has been undertaken and acted upon. Further restructure and realignment of priorities has been undertaken to further meet the needs of the school moving forward.
 - The financial affairs of the school are overseen well, but much more is needed to make sure that the pupil premium allocation is spent wisely by leaders and has the necessary impact.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created an atmosphere where the safety and well-being of pupils is paramount. Staff are well trained and well informed, and school policies and procedures are understood and implemented effectively. Issues are quickly responded to and a range of agencies are appropriately used. Communication with parents is much improved and pupils told inspectors that they felt safe and well supported within school. They said that they received good advice and training about how to stay safe when using the internet and were aware of the risks associated with sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across school is too variable and requires improvement. There is some excellent practice within English and there are some developing pockets of good practice in other subject areas. However, in some curriculum areas, pupils still do not achieve and learn at the level at which they are capable.
- Many pupils should be achieving much higher grades and making far more progress. Some teachers do not use the information about pupils, mainly those at higher-ability starting points, to plan work at the correct level. Opportunities for pupils to develop high-level learning skills are sometimes lost. At times, pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- An assessment and marking policy is in place. However, not all teachers make sure that they follow the guidance within it. This means that some pupils do not receive effective feedback about their work in some of the subjects that they study.
- The quality and frequency of homework is too variable. Leaders are aware of this and it is an area of focus for them.
- There is some expert teaching within English. Teachers have high expectations in this subject and pupils are keen to live up to these. The marking and feedback in this subject area is exemplary.
- Leaders have implemented the 'William Allitt way'. This set of classroom expectations is helping to promote more consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The quality of literacy across the curriculum is improving. Inspectors saw some good evidence of this within science. The work in pupils' books revealed that the quality of literacy teaching had clearly enhanced the learning skills of pupils and their science explanations were improved as a result.
- The leader of teaching and learning is new to this role. Already her work is having an impact. Increasingly, teachers have an enthusiasm to share their practice and work together to improve. There is an eagerness for professional development and to make sure that the quality of teaching for all pupils, in all subjects, is at least good.
- Leaders are keen to address pupils' underperformance in a range of creative ways. During the inspection, a group of carefully selected pupils were involved in a series of workshops led by a published author. Leaders said that they wanted their pupils, particularly boys, to learn from positive reading and writing role models. Pupils told inspectors that they had 'really enjoyed' this learning opportunity.
- Pupils, in the main, read fluently and are helped to develop a love of reading. Those pupils who struggle are well supported and are taught the strategies that they need to improve.
- Teachers promote strong working relationships with their pupils and this is a real strength of teaching

throughout the school. Teachers encourage good dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation. Pupils told inspectors how highly they valued this. When the learning is appropriately pitched, pupils thrive.

- Leaders have made sure that pupils learn in a clean and stimulating environment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from positive relationships with their teachers, they are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their personal skills, and are confident and self-aware young people as a result.
- Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe within their school. They appreciated the efforts of their teachers in making sure that they were kept well informed about issues such as exploitation, radicalisation and keeping safe when using the internet. Regular enrichment activities take place and visiting speakers are engaged so that pupils have every opportunity for good advice from experts.
- Pupils understand about the different types of bullying and are confident that there is someone they could go to to get help if they or someone that they knew was at risk. A group of pupils have been given the role of 'bullying ambassadors' and are a source of pupil-to-pupil support. The school was recently awarded the local authority anti-bullying award.
- Careers advice and guidance to pupils is good. Much effort is taken to ensure that pupils take confident next steps towards education, employment or training. Pupils told inspectors that they highly valued this support and the opportunities that they were provided to undertake work experience, and visit further education providers and local employers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders do not have a good enough overview or accurate enough information about the attendance of groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils attend less well than others within the school, as do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are complex issues associated with this. Even so, leaders' information is not sharp enough to ensure that rapid improvement can be planned and then actioned.
- The persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils is still too high. There have been improvements, but, again, the leadership of this issue is not sharp enough.
- Pupils begin to misbehave when the quality of teaching that they receive is not good enough. When the tasks set by the teacher are not at the correct level, pupils quickly lose interest and, in some instances, distract their peers and disrupt their learning.
- Leaders have implemented a system to manage pupils' behaviour. This is well understood by teachers and pupils. The incidents of poor behaviour are monitored closely by pastoral leads and are declining.
- Pupils are increasingly punctual to school. This is due to more rigorous checking and improved contact with parents.
- The number of pupils excluded from school have been reduced. Far fewer disadvantaged pupils are excluded from school.
- The pupils who are receiving their education outside of the school at alternative provision are closely monitored. The vast majority of these pupils are attending the provision and behaving well.
- Pupils are a real asset of this school. All pupils spoken with by inspectors were polite, articulate and well mannered. Pupils open doors for each other and for visitors, and greet each other with smiles. At breaktime and lunchtime, they gather and spend time with their friends in a positive and harmonious way.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils generally enter the school with above-average prior attainment. For example, in the current Year 10, almost half the pupils have prior attainment to suggest that they are of high ability. From these starting points, too few pupils gain the highest grades in a range of subjects. Too few make more than

the expected progress for their age.

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement in a range of subjects. Leaders have taken effective action to tackle underperformance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school's own assessment information indicates that results will improve. This is certainly the case within English. However, predictions for mathematics and science show that pupils will still make insufficient progress. Leaders recognise that underperformance also remains in design and technology.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are closing at key stage 3. At key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils still make less progress than others within the school. They make much less progress than all pupils nationally. There are signs of improvement in English, but not enough in other subjects, including mathematics. This means that some disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not as well prepared for the next stage in their education or training as they should be.
- Leaders have rightly ensured that a performance information system is in place, and is used and understood by all teachers. They acknowledge that the ambition set within this system is too low. They recognise that more ambitious target setting is required to ensure that pupils gain the grades that their starting points indicate.
- Leaders have ensured that current performance information is based on more accurate teacher assessments. Staff have been involved in comparing assessments within school and with other schools, with exam boards and the local authority, in order to check that they are accurate.
- Pupils who receive their education outside of the school are taking part in courses that suit their needs and are making progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of pupils who are looked after are well supported and are making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	112938
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10008507

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	874
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Frost
Headteacher	Jacqueline Cooper
Telephone number	01283 216402
Website	www.wiliamallitt.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	info@williamallitt.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 April 2014

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school with slightly more girls than the national average.
- The ethnicity of the majority of pupils is White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well below those found nationally.
- There is a slightly lower than average proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement at the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A number of pupils are receiving their education outside of the school at South Derbyshire Inclusion Centre, Next Steps and Forest Lodge.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership, staffing and in governance.
- The Queen Elizabeth Grammar School provides funded support to the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed over 30 parts of lessons. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed a selection of Year 9 English workshops led by a visiting author.
- Inspectors observed Year 7 taking part in a variety of 'Opening Minds' sessions.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including those with responsibility for pupils' achievement, behaviour, attendance, safety and welfare. The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a governor. Representatives from the local authority and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School were also spoken with.
- Three groups of pupils were spoken with and an inspector heard a group of pupils read. Inspectors spoke more informally with pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and in their lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, the work in pupils' books, by year group and in particular subjects.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including leaders' self-evaluation, the school development plan, and information regarding pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement. Documents relating to pupils' welfare and safety were assessed and discussed with leaders.
- Inspectors took into account the views of those parents who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Francisco Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Staley	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Vasey	Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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