

# Vision Studio School

Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG19 7BB

## Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's safeguarding policies and systems meet requirements or are effective in keeping pupils safe.
- Turbulence in leadership has led to uncertainty over the school's direction. Although now resolved, this has meant that the school did not adapt quickly enough to meet the needs of its pupils.
- Middle leaders are not all effective in monitoring the quality of teaching, tracking the achievement of groups and leading improvements in their area.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is inadequate. Poor leadership and teaching in this area have left too many pupils without the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to gain basic qualifications.
- Teaching does not take sufficient account of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The tasks that pupils do are sometimes insufficiently demanding.
- Teaching does not routinely promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils who face challenges do not always know how to access support in class.
- A significant minority of pupils do not comply with the school's no-smoking policy. Many pupils who spoke with inspectors expressed their concern about smoking on the school site.
- Pupils do not have enough to occupy them at lunchtime. The range of opportunities for pupils to improve their physical well-being is too narrow.
- Attendance, while improving, remains well below national averages.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Pupils who retake GCSE examinations in English and mathematics are not all successful in improving their grade.

### The school has the following strengths

- The current principal has set a new direction for the school, and leads with determination and vision. Actions to improve teaching, attendance and behaviour are beginning to have impact.
- The programme of work-based learning and work experience has been much improved and is successful in improving pupils' confidence and workplace skills. Such opportunities are highly valued by pupils.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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.

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - undertaking an urgent review of the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they fully comply with the latest legislation, are well understood by all members of the school community and are consistently effective in promoting pupils' welfare
  - improving the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by ensuring that all teachers have the training and skills to meet these pupils' specific learning needs
  - ensuring that all middle leaders are equally effective in leading improvements in their area and holding teachers to account for the progress that pupils make
  - ensuring that recent improvements to teaching, learning and assessment are embedded across the whole school, so that teaching in every subject and key stage is never less than good.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and raise outcomes for pupils, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - teachers and support staff use information about pupils to plan learning to meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - work set is well matched to pupils' abilities and enables them to make rapid progress
  - teaching in all subjects contributes to improving pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy
  - teachers' questioning enables them to assess the progress of all pupils and adapt tasks as appropriate.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - eradicating all instances of smoking on the school site and encouraging more pupils to take up the offer of smoking cessation courses
  - improving the range of activities on offer at lunchtime
  - ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to access a wider range of physical activities
  - ensuring that pupils' attendance continues to improve.

- Continue to improve outcomes for students on 16 to 19 study programmes, including for pupils who retake GCSE English and mathematics.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The school has been led by three different principals in three years. Changes to leadership have meant that the school has not been clear about its direction or able to improve at the rate that is necessary.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding lack sufficient oversight. Leaders and those responsible for governance have not checked that the arrangements are fit for purpose, fully complied with or meet the pupils' needs well enough.
- Since the school opened, leaders have not ensured that teaching and the outcomes achieved by pupils have been good enough. Turbulence in the staffing arrangements have led to inconsistent teaching and underachievement. In particular, poor leadership and teaching of mathematics have hindered pupils' chances of achieving good qualifications.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school meets its aim to ensure that pupils leave the school with a good balance of academic and vocational qualifications. Too many pupils have left the school without achieving basic qualifications in English and mathematics.
- The school has attracted a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum and teaching have adapted quickly enough to meet these pupils' needs. Teachers and middle leaders who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they would welcome more support in this area.
- The leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities is new in post. There are plans in place to improve provision for these pupils, including improving training for teachers, but these are not yet implemented. The information that teachers have about how to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities lacks sufficient detail. Leaders are able to show the impact of specific interventions, such as reading improvement programmes, but are not able to show the full impact of the funding received for these pupils.
- Middle leaders are not equally effective in leading improvements in their area, supporting teachers or holding them to account. Some of them have worked with external partners, such as the Redhill Teaching School Alliance, to improve their leadership skills. Not all middle leaders, however, know how well groups of pupils are performing or ensure that teachers use this information to plan effective learning.
- The use of pupil premium funding has not been successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the same progress as their peers.
- Despite these many weaknesses, the school has strengths. The current principal has set a new direction for the school and leads with a clear moral purpose to improve the life chances of pupils at the school. On his appointment, he quickly established a whole-school development plan that identified the right priorities for improvement.
- The new systems put in place by current leaders are beginning to have impact. For example, following the introduction of a set of 'non-negotiable' expectations, teachers now have a clearer understanding of the basics of good teaching.

- There are increased opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own practice and that of others. Staff understand the current direction of the school. They are motivated, happy and supportive of the leadership.
- Leaders have strengthened the arrangements for performance management. The targets that are set for teachers are now more robust and are linked more clearly to the whole-school development plan.
- The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to gain experience of the workplace alongside academic qualifications. Pupils enjoy their work-based learning and many gain in confidence and skills during their time at the school. However, the range of activities for physical education is currently limited.
- Leaders have improved the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a revamped programme of assemblies and tutorials. Assemblies have raised awareness of themes connected to British values, such as human rights and resisting radicalisation. Coupled with opportunities to develop their workplace skills, these sessions are ensuring that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have established effective partnerships with local schools that are contributing to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. For example, leaders have worked alongside staff from the Redhill Teaching School Alliance to ensure that the assessments of pupils' attainment on entry to the school and the predictions for their outcomes are accurate. In addition, links with the local area behaviour partnership are used well to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils and to provide additional behaviour support for some pupils.
- Current leaders have improved pupils' safety by ensuring that they remain on site or under adult supervision during the school day. Older students in particular appreciate that the school is now a safer place.
- The school's sponsor, the West Nottinghamshire College, provides support to the school through specialist teaching and resources at its engineering innovation centre. The sponsor further supports the school by maintaining its single central record and with other human resource functions.
- The school works closely with an education adviser from the Department for Education. This support has been effective in allowing leaders to have a more accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to plan improvement strategies accordingly.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are skilled and experienced. They have not, however, used their skills to ensure that leaders carry out their functions effectively.
- Governors have not met their statutory duties to safeguard and promote pupils' well-being. They have not checked that the school's safeguarding policies and practices were fit for purpose. In adopting the recent safeguarding policy, they did not check that it followed the legal guidance or met pupils' needs sufficiently well.
- Information provided to governors has not been sufficiently accurate. Until recently, governors had an overly positive view of the school's performance. Governors who spoke with inspectors were not clear about the school's most recent performance information.

- Records of the meetings of the governing body show that governors ask challenging questions of leaders. For example, they have asked leaders to ensure that predictions for pupils' performance are accurate.
- Four of the governors are local business leaders. Ties with local business are used effectively to improve the opportunities for work-based learning.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The school's policy makes reference to the latest legislation but does not reflect changes to the legislation closely enough. For example, it does not set out clearly how the school will manage allegations of peer-on-peer abuse or sexting. It does not provide clear guidance for staff or parents. It states, for example, that all cases should be referred to the principal, but this statement does not reflect current practice.
- Information about serious safeguarding concerns have not been shared with the local authority or with parents in a timely manner. Staff do not always follow the school's guidance on how to record concerns or their contact with parents.
- Staff who spoke with inspectors were not clear about their statutory duties, for example regarding female genital mutilation, how to spot the signs of abuse or how to report concerns to the local authority. They did not understand their role in promoting early help.
- The school's system for monitoring cases of concern lacks clarity. Leaders have implemented a 'traffic light' system to highlight and monitor pupils who are particularly vulnerable. The system is not well implemented. Pupils who are at serious risk of harm, for example, are rated 'amber' or 'green'.
- The school's checks on the suitability of staff do not meet requirements. Staff who have gaps in their employment history have not been questioned about these gaps at interview. The system to check recruitment processes is not sufficiently robust. While there are expectations in place for these questions to be asked, governors do not check that these expectations are fulfilled.
- Four members of staff have been trained to the level of designated senior leader. Despite this, the weaknesses in the current arrangements point to a gap in the oversight, leadership and governance of safeguarding and a lack of capacity to improve this area of the school's work.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because pupils do not develop sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Hampered by a legacy of poor teaching, current pupils continue to underachieve.
- Teaching does not routinely plan to meet pupils' different needs, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers told inspectors that they would welcome further guidance in this area.

- Some tasks are too undemanding. Pupils sometimes complete work that is beneath their ability level and which they do not find challenging. They do not always move quickly enough to complete work in greater depth or tasks that are more difficult.
- Teachers do not ensure that they know how all pupils are doing. Sometimes, they take responses from a few pupils only, while others are less engaged or involved in the lesson.
- Teaching does not routinely promote pupils' literacy or numeracy skills. Many classrooms have displays that focus on literacy development, for example how to use the right scientific vocabulary. Pupils do not always know how to access support to improve their own literacy, however. They are not certain of how to check the spelling of words, for example, or how to help themselves if they are stuck.
- Improvements to teaching are beginning to have impact. The common use of the 'SALT' (strengths, attitude, level, target) technique has led to pupils receiving more consistent feedback on their work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Where learning is most effective, they use this to ensure that pupils know how to be successful in their work. For example, work in English and engineering is well planned to ensure that pupils know how to achieve their target grades.
- Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and acknowledge that teachers do their best for them. However, some pupils feel that not all teachers would address instances of discriminatory language in the classroom.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

## **Inadequate**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are not fit for purpose. This leaves pupils unnecessarily at risk.
- Many pupils who spoke with inspectors expressed their concern about the levels of smoking on the school site. While leaders provide support through smoking cessation courses, pupils who spoke with inspectors felt that staff did not actively encourage them to take up such support.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. They know the different forms that bullying can take. Pupils told inspectors that serious bullying issues would be dealt with appropriately by staff. However, not all pupils felt that teachers would take seriously and address incidents of prejudiced language in class.
- The school's curriculum does not currently allow for all pupils to take part in a range of physical activities. Some pupils feel that there are too few opportunities for them to 'let off steam' or calm down.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to learn about healthy lifestyles through their programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Not all pupils had a robust understanding of what is meant by healthy relationships.

- There are increased opportunities to learn about British values in the curriculum. However, not all pupils have a secure understanding of this aspect of their learning.
- Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers. They appreciate the advice and guidance they receive from their tutors and personal coaches. They state that they have all had individual, external advice regarding their next steps and know how to prepare for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The principal has taken important steps to improve safety in the school, for example by ensuring that key stage 4 pupils remain on site during the lunch hour. Older students state that as a result of this and other actions, the school is now a safer place.
- There are examples of the school's positive support for pupils. One parent told the lead inspector that she was pleased with the level of care her child had received. In her words, she felt that the staff deserved 'a pat on the back'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not display consistently positive attitudes to learning in class. The school's records show that some lessons continue to be disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Pupils told inspectors that the principal 'has put new boundaries in place'. While some pupils have struggled to cope with these higher expectations, they understand the importance of improving behaviour. Observations of learning showed that behaviour was, for the most part, well managed.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils with significant behaviour needs. The behaviour support plans in place for these pupils show that the school has had some success in improving the behaviour of individual pupils. The strategies have not proven successful for all pupils, however.
- Many of the school's pupils have missed significant periods of schooling prior to joining the school. The school's records show that leaders have been successful in improving the attendance of the majority of these pupils. Some of these pupils have significantly increased their attendance. Nonetheless, overall attendance remains below national averages. The attendance of a minority of pupils remains stubbornly low.
- The school maintains good communication with staff at the alternative provision sites that a few pupils attend. It receives daily attendance and weekly progress reports. These reports show that most pupils have improved their attendance since beginning their courses.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride. Their appearance is smart and business-like.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate, because too few pupils leave the school having attained basic qualifications in English and mathematics. In 2016, less than one in ten pupils achieved a grade A\* to C in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics indicates significant underachievement. A legacy of poor teaching has meant that too few pupils make adequate progress from their



starting points. Pupils in the current Year 11 continue to be affected by historically poor teaching. There are significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics that have not been addressed quickly enough.

- Achievement in science shows some signs of improvement. In 2016, attainment and progress in science at key stage 4 were well below average. Current information suggests that a greater proportion of pupils are now on track to achieve their target grade, but pupils' progress is still not good enough.
- Information provided by the school shows ongoing disparity in achievement between different subjects at key stage 4. In subjects such as children's play, learning and development, and in engineering, pupils are achieving well. They do much less well in citizenship.
- Not all middle leaders were able to provide information about the progress of different groups. Information provided by the school shows that disadvantaged pupils are making less progress than their peers in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making less progress than their peers in English, mathematics and science.
- Interventions to improve pupils' reading and spelling ages have been successful. Almost all pupils who have received such support have improved their reading and spelling skills.
- Staff monitor the progress of pupils on alternative provision courses through weekly contact with providers. Increased attendance on their chosen courses is supporting pupils to improve their achievement and readiness for their next steps.
- The school is successful in ensuring that pupils continue into education, employment or training. Leaders acknowledge that improved performance at GCSE and level 3 vocational qualifications would increase the opportunities open to pupils.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes in 2016 for students on 16 to 19 study programmes were below average. The school did not meet the 16 to 19 minimum standards for students taking applied general qualifications. Too few students who retook GCSE mathematics were successful in improving their grade.
- Leaders took action to address underperformance in the sixth form by improving teaching, learning and assessment and introducing more aspirational targets for students. Current information suggests that a greater proportion of students are on track to meet their target grades. While improvements are evident, achievement in this key stage remains a mixed picture.
- There are ongoing inconsistencies in the teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form. Some learning is well planned to meet students' needs, but this is not consistently the case. It is not always clear how students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported in class. On occasion, expectations of what students can do are too low.
- The range of subjects on offer at key stage 5 is narrow, but is in keeping with the school's funding agreement and is well matched to local employment needs. Students who spoke with inspectors were happy with their chosen courses.

- Students in the sixth form generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They have good attitudes to their learning and demonstrate good levels of mutual support during lessons. There is a positive and inclusive atmosphere.
- Work-based learning opportunities are successful in improving students' confidence and readiness for the world of work. Students confirmed how much they value these opportunities.
- Students who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they have positive and supportive relationships with their teachers and feel safe in school. They commented in particular on the improved behaviour and safety in school since the current principal took up post.
- Students in the sixth form have a good awareness of what qualifications they will need for their next stage of learning or employment. An improved programme of careers education has led to greater knowledge of the options that are open to them. The overwhelming majority are successful in securing places in training, employment or further education.

## School details

Unique reference number	140812
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10023074

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	38
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Dame Asha Khemka
Principal	Chris Hatherall
Telephone number	01623 413622
Website	<a href="http://www.visionstudioschool.co.uk/">www.visionstudioschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:chris.hatherall@visionstudioschool.co.uk">chris.hatherall@visionstudioschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. It also meets the Department for Education guidance on what academies and free schools should publish.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It has a much higher than average proportion of girls. The school is sponsored by the West Nottinghamshire Educational Trust, a single academy trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.

- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. No pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- A small number of pupils receive alternative provision through one-to-one support at home, First Class Tailored Solutions, East Midlands Vocational Academy and R@MP.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards. The school's curriculum does not offer academic Ebacc courses such as history, geography and modern foreign languages.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects in both key stages. Many observations were carried out jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders and governors. The lead inspector met with the school's education adviser from the Department for Education. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils from both key stages. They spoke informally with pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, performance information, minutes of the governing body, performance management information, records of attendance, behaviour and bullying and documentation relating to safeguarding. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of the seven responses to the staff survey, three responses to Parent View and the three responses to the pupil survey. The lead inspector met with a parent.

## Inspection team

Deirdre Duignan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Victor Reid	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Richardson	Her Majesty's Inspector

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