

Heanor Gate Science College

Kirkley Drive, Heanor, DE75 7RA

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Since becoming an academy, the college has declined. Achievement is inadequate because many students do not make the progress they should, particularly in English.
- The most-able students, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are underachieving.
- The sixth form is inadequate. A worrying number of students begin courses and do not finish them. Too few students, especially boys, make the progress expected of them at A level.
- Teaching is inadequate. Too many lessons require improvement and, over time, this has resulted in students' underachievement. The work set in lessons is often not challenging or engaging enough, particularly for the most able.
- Behaviour requires improvement. More students are excluded than in most schools, particularly those who have special educational needs. This reflects ineffective behaviour-management systems.
- The headteacher and the governing body have not been effective. They have an unrealistic view of the college. Governors have not held the headteacher to account, especially with regard to students' inadequate achievement over the last two years.

The school has the following strengths

- Students achieve well in some subjects, including French and sociology. Boys achieve well in mathematics.
- Teachers work hard and establish good relationships with the students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 41 lessons taught by 39 teachers. Fourteen of these observations were conducted jointly with the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and leaders, such as the special educational needs coordinator and some subject leaders. An interview took place with five representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Meetings were also held with groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 136 responses to the Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed 90 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team evaluated information including: the college’s self-evaluation; behaviour, attendance and exclusion records; information about students’ achievement and progress; minutes of governing body meetings and documents used by leaders to monitor the college’s work.

Inspection team

Ian McNeilly, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Richard Masterton

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

Timothy Pank

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Heanor Gate Science College converted to become an academy school on 1 November 2011. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The college is a larger-than-average secondary school with a sixth form. It has a specialism in science.
- Most of the students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students for whom the college receives the pupil premium is average. This additional government funding is for students in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and some others.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The college does not have specially resourced provision for those students who have special educational needs.
- There is no alternative educational provision off-site.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is good or better by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan high-quality, relevant learning in lessons that challenges and engages students
 - increase opportunities for students to learn in pairs and small groups
 - check students' understanding regularly during lessons and especially at the beginning of tasks.
- Raise the achievement of all groups, particularly the most-able and disabled students and those who have special educational needs by:
 - setting tasks appropriate to students' ability levels, making sure they are always challenging
 - ensuring that all sixth form students are placed on suitable courses.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - reducing the numbers of exclusions, particularly of those who have special educational needs, through creating more effective, in-school behaviour management systems.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - evaluating the qualities of the college more realistically, including managing the headteacher's performance more rigorously, and acting effectively upon subsequent findings
 - creating a curriculum which meets the needs of the most able.

- Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of governance, including a specific focus on the college's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because not enough students make as much progress as they should. This is particularly the case in GCSE English, where both attainment and progress have declined in each of the last two years. In GCSE English in 2013, initial data show just over half of students made the progress expected of them, a figure well below the national average in 2012.
- The most-able students make inadequate progress. Even in mathematics, in which the college performs reasonably overall, the proportion of the most-able students who made expected progress in the 2012 GCSE examinations was below national comparisons. The college's leaders were aware of this and took action to address the issue. An improvement was seen in the performance of the most-able students in 2013, but it was still below what was reasonably to be expected.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are underachieving in certain key subjects. In 2012, 18% of these students achieved a GCSE grade C or higher in English compared to 33% nationally. This was mainly due to students supported through school action underachieving significantly. In both English and mathematics in 2013, the majority of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who joined the college at National Curriculum Level 4 did not make expected progress. Students supported through school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs underachieved in English and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics. However, the teaching of reading to students who have low ability is good, particularly in Year 7.
- The few students who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively and results in increased rates of progress for the targeted students in both English and mathematics.
- In 2012 the average results in examinations and the progress made by students supported by the pupil premium were lower than for other students in the college. When compared to national averages, this group of students was one GCSE grade behind in both English and mathematics. The gap in the college between these students and others narrowed in 2013 to half a grade in both English and mathematics. However, in English, this was not due to the increased progress of students in receipt of pupil premium but because the achievement of other students fell. The college's leaders could not provide detailed information on the impact of pupil premium funding.
- Literacy across the curriculum was a focus for the college in 2012/13 and continues to be so. Good practice was seen in a Year 13 physics lesson where students were provided with a 'literacy mat' as well as a prompt sheet to help them record their evaluations of a science experiment accurately. Students presented their work neatly and tried to write accurately.
- The most-able students have been entered early for GCSE mathematics. This has had little positive impact. In 2012, fewer of these students than the college anticipated made or exceeded the rates of progress expected. However, overall, the college's results are broadly average for GCSE mathematics.
- In 2012, boys underachieved significantly at A level. On average, they achieved more than two thirds of a grade lower than the national average. Performance at AS level was broadly average. Achievement in the sixth form improved in 2013, though success rates are still below national averages. Students performed well in sociology and photography at A level in 2013.

- Of concern is the number of sixth form students who discontinue their courses before they take concluding examinations. For every five students who start a course, one drops out.
- The college has a science specialism. The college's achievement at GCSE level in biology, chemistry and physics is below the national average. The college does better in GCSE core science, the subject that combines the three separate sciences. At GCSE level, students achieve well in French, Spanish, religious education, geography and photography.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Although a variety of teaching quality was seen during the inspection, it is clear that, overall, teaching is inadequate as many students do not make the progress they should. Too often, the needs of the most-able students are not met. Work is mainly set at a level for those of average ability and these students sometimes make good progress in some subjects as a result. However, this situation means that the most-able students are insufficiently challenged; too few of them make the expected progress.
- This lack of challenge for the most able in the main college continues into the sixth form. In lessons, there is not enough encouragement or expectation of the intellectual curiosity required for successful progress in advanced studies. This has resulted in underachievement, particularly at the higher grades and, especially, for boys.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs has not resulted in those pupils making the progress expected of them. However, teaching for this group has not been supported by the college's behaviour policy, which has seen a disproportionate number of these students spending less time in lessons than they should. The teaching of students in receipt of the pupil premium has resulted in slightly increased progress in mathematics. However, the progress of these students declined slightly in English.
- Teachers do not always check that students' understanding is secure, especially at the beginning of tasks, and this has resulted in some students making inadequate progress despite their positive efforts.
- Opportunities for students to work in pairs or in small groups are often missed. As a result, students are not engaged as well as they could be.
- Mathematics and literacy teaching has been a focus for the college recently, and non-specialist teachers are developing their skills in these areas. Students' reading levels are mainly in line with national expectations. In one lesson, almost everyone in a Year 9 class of lower-ability students showed competence in reading aloud.
- Some good teaching does take place in the college. Where practice is best, teachers make sure that work is set appropriate to students' abilities and that the material provided engages the students' interest. In these lessons, questions provoked thought rather than simply asked for information.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The college has a 'zero tolerance' behaviour policy. This has resulted in a rate of exclusion which

is well above the national average. The numbers of excluded students are rising; students who have special needs are over represented in this figure. The college has been unsuccessful in changing the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of students for the better, so that the need to exclude them reduces.

- Students' attitudes to learning are variable. They can be very positive and, where they are, this helps progress. At other times, students are compliant rather than engaged and this is directly linked to the quality of teaching.
- Most students are polite, sociable and well-mannered. They get on well with their teachers and with each other. Many students take up the extra-curricular opportunities provided.
- Assemblies are used to raise students' awareness of different types of bullying. Students were able to speak with knowledge about issues, such as cyber-bullying and homophobia.
- Attendance is just below the national average but is improving slowly. The attendance of students who have a statement of special educational needs is average. The attendance of other groups of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average overall.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The college's self-evaluation shows that the headteacher and other senior leaders, including governors, have an overly optimistic view of the college's current position. This applies to every area of the college. Because of this, neither headteacher nor governors have sought any outside support to assist college improvement at leadership level, other than an annual target setting procedure. This practice is ineffective.
- After English GCSE results declined in 2012, college leaders took steps to try and ensure improvements were shown in this area. In fact, the results declined further. This was unforeseen by the leaders in charge of this subject.
- The performance management of the headteacher is inadequate. The annually set targets are not routinely reviewed and little happens in practical terms if the original targets are not met.
- The performance management of teachers is inadequate. The vast majority of teachers were approved for pay progression even though much of the teaching is weak. However, senior leaders are aware of this deficiency and the college has a new strategy in place for 2013 which is more comprehensive.
- Leaders in the sixth form do not use data about students' progress and attainment well enough to inform their strategies. They have, however, overseen some improvements in achievement at A level in the last year.
- The curriculum is inadequate for the most-able students. It provides a wide range of qualifications, which cater for the needs and interests of most students, particularly those of lower ability. These include courses such as health and social care, construction, and hair and beauty studies. However, some of the most-able students pursue non-GCSE courses when they could take qualifications which offer a greater level of academic challenge.

- The school timetable does not allow for much extra-curricular activity at lunchtime but several clubs take place after school, including a variety relating to sport and arts. Music is promoted through the steel band club and choir. The college is proud of its association with the Royal Air Force through being a centre for a Combined Cadet Force. Students are also given opportunities to go on a variety of trips, including some overseas. The college runs a hair and beauty salon which is open to the public. Local businesses work with the college and, as a result, students are made more aware of the world of employment.
- Despite the decline in English results, a greater proportion of pupil premium funding was directed towards mathematics. The headteacher was unable to show the specific impact of the extra funding the college has received.
- The college is highly regarded by parents and carers; college leaders have been effective in seeking their views and keeping them informed.
- College leaders have sought to ensure that students' attitudes to learning are positive and that poor behaviour is consistently dealt with. This has resulted in an inappropriately high rate of exclusions. Leaders have tackled the symptoms rather than the underlying problems that need addressing.
- Careers guidance in the college is comprehensive and there are several staff members assigned to offer advice. External, independent advice is available to students from professionals who visit the college though most support is offered by college staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is inadequate. The governors lack basic knowledge about the college's performance and the quality of teaching. They have received training or information on key aspects of their role but this has not been effective. Their performance management of the headteacher is weak as is their oversight of the appraisal of all staff. The individuals involved are proud of the college and loyal to the headteacher. However, these qualities are currently clouding the governors' judgement and, as a result, they are failing to carry out their duties effectively. They are unaware of how pupil premium funding has been spent and the impact it has had. At present, the governing body is not capable of adequately holding the headteacher or other leaders to account.

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	137606
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	428028

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1385
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wayne Judson
Headteacher	Robert Howard
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01773 716396
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