

# da Vinci Community College

St Andrew's View, Breadsall, Derby, DE21 4ET

**Inspection dates** 4–5 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students are not making quick enough progress to raise attainment levels which are currently below average.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that take into account what all groups of students can do.
- Some teachers do not mark students' work often or thoroughly enough so that students know what to do in order to achieve their targets in each subject.
- Attendance, although improving, is below the national average of secondary schools.
- The systems that leaders use to check on students' progress and the quality of teaching are at an early stage and inconsistently applied across the school. Not all teachers are held to account for the progress made by students in their lesson or are tackling those who are underachieving quickly enough
- Some governors do not have the skills and expertise to be able to hold leaders to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students feel safe and they generally behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The range of subjects and courses on offer has been improved so that it is more suitable for all students. This is leading to better results.
- The school provides good support to ensure that students can improve their reading ability, and literacy skills are promoted well across all subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special needs, and students known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well as a result of targeted additional support.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons. Some observations were joint visits with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with students, a representative from the governing body, a local authority representative and school staff including middle and senior leaders and non-teachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised key documents including examination results for 2012 and other key data for the last three years, examined records for behaviour and attendance, and documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching at the school.
- Twenty-three responses to Parent View online questionnaire were evaluated, in addition to 55 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Justine McNeillie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Davis	Additional Inspector
Jerry Seymour	Additional Inspector
Janet Harvey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school.
- Most students are from a White British or other White backgrounds. Few are from other minority ethnic heritages. There is a small although increasing number of students from Roma or Gypsy heritage.
- An above-average proportion of students are supported at school action. A below-average proportion of students are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has a higher proportion than nationally of students who join the school part way through the school year.
- The proportion of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is extra funding to support students in local authority care, those with parents in the armed forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A small number of students follow courses outside the school. These include with the Prince's Trust, a Rolls Royce Apprenticeship; a placement with a hairdresser one day a week; and a day with Derby Pride Academy.
- The school has an International School award and Healthy Schools status.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2011.

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

- Raise achievement by making sure that teaching is at least consistently good by:
  - making sure that all teachers plan lessons that take into account what all groups of students can do and how they learn best
  - marking students' written work regularly and with clear subject-specific targets for improvement so that students know what to do to reach their target grades.
- Improve students' attendance to bring it at least in line with the national average for secondary schools by developing further the work started by the new non-teaching staff who work with students with low attendance.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's leadership in order to raise achievement by:
  - making more regular checks on how students are learning and their progress in each subject and building on the good practice that already exists
  - making sure that governors are sufficiently informed and trained to enable them to provide effective challenge for the school's leaders and to hold them to account. This includes checking how the pupil premium funding is being used.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When students start at the school their attainment in English and mathematics is much lower than other schools nationally. These low levels of skills in students' reading, writing, communication and in mathematics are being addressed and there is some evidence that the support the school is providing is making a positive difference. While attainment in English, mathematics and science is still below the national average, there are some steady improvements.
- The attainment in other subjects is variable. In some subjects, it is in line with the national average whilst in others it is below. For example, achievement in science has been a concern but is improving. This is because more appropriate courses are being provided and the quality of teaching has improved. Students say that science is now more interesting and that they are better prepared for their examinations.
- The results for 2012 indicated that the progress of students with different abilities and of different backgrounds was variable. In English, those with higher levels of ability have made less progress than others, whereas, in mathematics, the less able pupils achieved less well in recent examinations. The very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds usually perform at least as well as well as this group does nationally.
- The work to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs is increasingly successful. There are strong examples of effective individual support to enable students with complex needs to succeed. Examples include a group of students who made more than one year's progress in their reading during their first year at the school due to careful help and support.
- Students supported by the pupil premium funding achieve well. The school has considered carefully how to spend pupil premium funding. It includes an increase in teaching staff in order to reduce class sizes, providing additional courses to support students' development of literacy skills and funding non-teaching staff to help students to overcome barriers to learning. The impact of this has been seen, for example, in a higher proportion of pupils making the progress that they should in mathematics, increased levels of attendance and a reduction in exclusions.
- Some students are chosen to be entered early for some examinations but if they do not do as well as they are able to do, they take the examination again in the following year.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but there is still some variability in its quality. It is not yet good enough to make sure that all pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently make sure that the lessons that they plan challenge and motivate all students to produce their best work. Teachers often expect all pupils in the class to complete the same task, not always having individual ones for the more or less able in the class. However, teachers in some subjects are planning increasingly effectively. For example in mathematics, supervised by their teacher, students start the lesson by selecting tasks that closely match their ability.

- While the quality of marking of students' work has been identified by leaders as a focus for improvement, it is still inconsistent. Feedback does not always provide students with clear and specific steps on how to improve their work, or how to reach and exceed their target grades.
- Good relationships exist between teachers and students. This has supported the improvement in the behaviour of students since the last inspection and has begun to enable teachers to deliver more engaging lessons. Many science lessons now include experiments as a key component so students are more positive about the subject. Older pupils said that most of their teachers made a considerable effort to make their lessons interesting and relevant.
- Where teaching is good or better, students work hard and are able to explain clearly what they are learning and what they need to do in order to improve. For example, in an outstanding hospitality and catering lesson, students were able to show strengths in both key aspects of the subject, were clearly motivated by the task and also able to clearly explain the steps in their learning and what was further needed to improve their work. The focus on how to achieve the highest examination results motivated students well.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, during a lesson in religious education, students worked in supportive groups to develop their understanding of different religious groups' views on experimenting on animals. They respectfully express balanced views on the subject.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school's revised behaviour policy and improvements in teaching have contributed to better behaviour since the last inspection. Older pupils say that behaviour is much improved as compared to when they started at the school.
  - Students' attitudes to learning are generally good and inspectors observed many examples where students worked cooperatively and supportively with each other.
  - The core values of the school of 'everyone a learner, everyone a leader and everyone valued' can be seen in practice. Whole-school priorities are matched to these values for students and staff. For example, the school has a successful student leadership system where a student is given the role of being the 'greeter' in every lesson. It is their responsibility to explain to visitors what the pupils are working on and why. Inspectors observed many examples of this being used to develop students' confidence.
  - Bullying and harassment are rare but do occasionally occur. The school has developed an effective anti-bullying programme and recently an anti-bullying week was led by the Chief Executive Officers, a small student group selected by both students and teachers to represent the students. Most students say they feel safe in school and are confident that bullying will be dealt with by adults.
  - The school welcomes students who join them partway throughout the year. This group often have complex backgrounds, such as having been excluded from another school or have difficult personal circumstances, and the school works hard to ensure that these students successfully integrate into the new learning environment.
  - Several new appointments of non-teaching staff have had a good effect on reducing the level of absenteeism and exclusions. There has been a decrease in the number of exclusions and a
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significant decrease in the number of teachers calling for support in their lessons.

- Behaviour in school, both in lessons and around the site, is generally good although, at times, when teaching is not good, pupils become distracted. Some students around the site are overly boisterous but this does not result in unsafe behaviour.
- Unacceptable behaviour has been further tackled by the successful use of internal support units and the level of support is closely matched to the needs of each individual student.
- The school has made strong inroads into improving the attendance of the students and providing support for families who face challenging circumstances. For example, three key staff have been appointed who work closely with individual students and their families. This has also reduced the levels of persistent absenteeism. However, the school is not at the same level yet as other schools nationally.
- The attendance and behaviour of students who are taught off the school site are monitored effectively so that these students make adequate progress in their learning.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The leaders of the school are gradually increasing the proportion of good or better teaching through improved monitoring and continued professional development. However, some of these procedures lack rigour. Leaders are not holding teachers sufficiently to account for the quality of planning to make sure that teachers plan to meet the learning needs of all students.
  - Staff formally assess students' progress at least termly and this is discussed regularly at leadership level between senior and middle leaders in addition to within departments. However, the existing leaders of subjects are not reviewing student targets frequently enough. As a result, underachievement is not identified quickly enough.
  - The work of the headteacher, supported by the senior team, has had a positive effect on the effective running of the school. As a result of self-evaluation, a revised behaviour policy was implemented and this led to improvements in behaviour. Suitable actions taken by leaders have resulted in improved attendance.
  - Senior leaders are supporting all staff to improve their teaching expertise in a number of ways. All staff have a weekly meeting that supports the development of the quality of their teaching and a small number of teachers have been coached by more successful practitioners. These actions are leading to improvements in teaching. Staff feel supported by the leaders of the school to improve and value opportunities that are provided to improve their skills. The system of setting targets for teachers is linked to pay and promotion.
  - All teachers now have their targets linked to the quality of their teaching in order to increase their individual responsibility for improvements in students' learning.
  - The school has taken steps to improve the range of subjects for all learners. This has included ensuring that all students have the opportunity to study the subjects required for the English Baccalaureate whilst others undertake qualifications in vocational subjects in accordance with their interests, such as the construction course taught off-site. These opportunities are better preparing students for the next stage in their learning and the school has a very strong record for ensuring that almost all students go on to employment, education or training. This is as a
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result of the school's effective careers education and alternative provision for a small number of students.

- Leaders have focused on improving the literacy skills of their students through a number of programmes. Younger pupils are confident to read to visitors, although there were missed opportunities seen in lessons where students were not invited to read aloud.
  - The local authority works closely with the school to support their improvement.
  - The school communicates regularly with parents and some have signed up to be a part of a parent group that was established as part of the school's Cooperative Trust status. It is too early to assess the impact of this group.
  - The arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements.
  - The governance of the school:
    - Although the structure of the governing body has improved since the previous inspection, aligning committees with the key aspects of the school, not all members have the expertise to be able to challenge school leaders. For example, governors do not all know how the pupil premium funding is spent so they are unable to challenge senior leaders over its effectiveness in raising the achievement of eligible students. Governors subscribe to an online training programme provided by the local authority but it is up to individual governors if they want to take part in the training or not. Governors hold the leaders to account over examination results. For example, two departments that had not performed to target in the summer 2012 examinations were asked to present their plans for improvement to the governing body at the next opportunity. Senior leaders provide some information regarding performance management. The management of teachers' performance targets now link to students' achievement and improvements to the quality of teaching. This information has been used to make decisions about teachers' pay and promotion.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134724
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	402631

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	605
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tracey Lee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Cottingham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 831515
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