

Adeyfield School

Longlands, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 4DE

Inspection dates

17–18 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 did not make the rate of progress expected nationally in mathematics and English in 2012 and 2013.
- Students with weak reading skills are not making rapid enough progress. They do not have enough opportunities to read in lessons or to use a variety of writing styles.
- Fewer students gain five or more GCSE A* to C grades including mathematics and English than in most schools.
- Marking does not inform students how to improve their work. Teachers do not always correct students' spelling, punctuation and grammar when marking work.
- Teaching is not consistently good. The work set in lessons is sometimes too easy for the most-able pupils.
- Too often, students do not think for themselves or develop their own ideas.
- Students' attendance is close to average but they are not always punctual to school and lessons.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Achievement is improving, but attainment in most courses remains below average.

The school has the following strengths

- Most students gain GCSE qualifications and almost all students now achieve at the expected rate throughout the school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Students are polite and respect one another and adults. Their behaviour in lessons has improved.
- The headteacher and the new senior leadership team have improved leadership, behaviour and teaching.
- Governors are effective. They are contributing well to the drive to improve teaching and students' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons. Seven of these were shared observations with members of the school’s leadership team. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons to look at students’ work.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s view of its own performance, development plan, policies and information about students’ performance, attendance, behaviour, the quality of teaching and the minutes of the parent forum.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body, staff, senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered the questionnaire returns from 42 members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online, Parent View, questionnaire, together with the school’s own survey of parents’ views.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terence Cook

Additional Inspector

Karen Roche

Additional Inspector

Gillian Walley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Adeyfield School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for certain groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Eleven students in Key Stage 4 attend alternative education at West Herts College or Oaklands College one day a week to support their achievement in a range of work-related studies.
- The school has a small sixth form, which is part of the East Dacorum Partnership. Other schools in the partnership are The Astley Cooper School and Longdean School.
- The school operates an inclusion centre for students; this is to reduce the possibility that they are excluded from school but also to support students who are finding school difficult.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There has been a change of headteacher and members of the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2012 and most other leaders for a year or less.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching in both key stages and in the sixth form so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide students with more opportunities to find things out for themselves
 - set activities in lessons that provide appropriate challenge for the most-able students
 - give students the opportunity and time in lessons to develop their thoughts and express their ideas clearly in both written and speaking activities.
- Raise students' achievement across all year groups, including in English and mathematics, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - give students clear advice on how to improve their work
 - mark students' work for spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - give students the opportunity to read in lessons and develop their writing skills
 - provide more opportunities for students to solve problems in mathematics lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that all students and families are persuaded of the value of the education provided, so all attend regularly and are punctual to school and lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students attain well below-average standards at the higher GCSE grades in most subjects, including in English and mathematics. Although they join the school with achievements below those of others of their age, students have often made less progress than is expected nationally. However, the school's data show that more students currently are making at least the nationally expected rate of progress in English and mathematics in each year group and the sixth form.
- Progress is not yet good across all subjects. The proportion of students making the nationally expected rate of progress in mathematics has improved year on year, but it is still not good. Students are not provided with enough opportunities to solve mathematical problems and apply their learning in other subjects. Recent changes to the mathematics curriculum are improving this but the school recognises that even more could be done.
- Although most students are now making the expected progress in English from their starting points, few are making good progress in this subject. Some students' basic skills of spelling, punctuation and accurate use of grammar are weak and hold back their grades. Improvement in these is not consistently supported by all teachers through the marking of students' work.
- Students are generally positive about their learning and most take a pride in their work. They are happy to answer and ask questions in lessons and share their understanding. Students talked confidently to inspectors about their work and what they needed to do to make progress. Their work in mathematics, English, science and humanities lessons confirmed the more rapid progress which most students, including the current Year 11, are now making.
- The school has changed its approach to entering students early for GCSE mathematics. It now enters only students who are considered capable of gaining grades A* to B. Of current Year 11 students, 19% gained an A* or A grade in Year 10, which is motivating and encouraging to more-able students and mathematics teaching alike.
- In 2013, attainment in GCSE subjects showed some improvement; for example, students taking English literature and home economics outperformed national results at the higher GCSE grades. However, relatively few students took these subjects.
- Year 7 students eligible for extra support through the catch-up funding make slower progress than they could because they have few opportunities to practise their skills in other lessons.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding to support eligible students with study facilities and personalised learning programmes, including one-to-one support. The gap between the achievement of these students and others in the school is closing. In 2013, they attained approximately half a grade below other students in English and two-thirds of a grade below in mathematics.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good overall. Those with the most support achieve well and make the best progress. For example, students receive one-to-one support in mathematics and, as a result, make good progress.
- Students on alternative programmes offsite achieve well and the courses provide well for their individual work-related interests and levels of ability so that they appreciate the value of their continuing education.

- The achievement and progress of students in the sixth form has improved over the last three years. Most sixth form students complete the courses they begin. The percentage of students who move into Year 13 from Year 12 has increased in the last year, as has the proportion who go on to higher education at the end of Year 13. Although all entrants for A-level examinations usually achieve their qualification, few gain the higher grades. However, most students enter the sixth form with lower achievements than most advanced-course entrants nationally. Progress and achievement in vocational subjects (BTEC) is good.
- Most students who join the sixth form without a higher grade GCSE in English or mathematics gain these qualifications during Year 12. Sixth form students who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve in line with their peers, but make similar and sometimes better progress from their starting points. The gap between the achievement of these students and their peers is less than that found in many schools.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable. Not enough teaching is good or better and so does not enable students to achieve consistently well.
- In some lessons, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough. Learning activities in these lessons are not planned well for all abilities, especially for the most-able students. Teachers sometimes spend too long giving information and instructions, unnecessarily limiting the time students have for completing work. Consequently, students' own skills in taking their learning forward for themselves are underdeveloped because they have too few opportunities to research and work on their own.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to read in lessons or develop their writing skills. In too many lessons, inspectors observed teachers reading sections from books rather than encouraging the students to read. When given a written task, students are often all given the same guidance rather than being allowed to write more freely.
- Marking is not used consistently to help students to improve on their work and think about the next steps they need to take to move their learning on. Although good examples were seen, in too many instances marking does not routinely make it clear to students what is good about their work and how it could be improved. In particular, teachers do not help students to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills by identifying and correcting the errors they make.
- In too many lessons, teachers' focus is on completing an activity rather than on the skills and understanding the students will learn and be able to apply in later learning.
- Where teaching is good, teachers used questions effectively to gauge students' understanding in order to move their learning on. In these lessons, students took an active part in the learning by solving problems, talking about their work with their peers and taking part in practical activities. They showed great enthusiasm for their work.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. Where teaching is effective, they use their expertise well to question students to develop knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Teaching assistants are well-deployed to support students within the classroom. They are effective in helping students with their learning. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well because support is well targeted on their needs and teachers

work well with teaching assistants to plan for these.

- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement because lessons do not always provide students with opportunities to manage their own learning, and to think and find things out for themselves. Not all teachers give students detailed guidance on how to improve their work. However, in most lessons observed, students were given good opportunities to discuss their learning. Those students who lack confidence in basic literacy and numeracy make good gains in these skills because of the good support provided for these students in the sixth form.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Attendance is close to average and improving. However, there are still a small number of families who are not persuaded of the value of education and do not ensure that their children attend regularly or arrive at school on time. The actions already taken by the school are having a positive impact and the number of students persistently absent from school has decreased. However, students' punctuality to school and lessons is not good enough. Inspectors observed several students arriving late to lessons. These students were not always challenged by teachers about the reason for their lateness.
- Attitudes to learning vary, often in line with the quality of teaching. Where students are well-motivated, they take an active role in lessons, including by asking questions and sharing their ideas with the class. This is not the norm, however. It is often the case that students are slow to contribute their ideas or work on their own.
- The behaviour of students around the school at break and lunch time and in corridors is good and has improved in the last year. Students are polite and show respect for one another and adults. Students spoken to by inspectors commented, 'Behaviour has improved, especially in the last year.' The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, considered behaviour in the school to be good.
- The strategies used by the school to support students in managing their behaviour, such as the inclusion centre, are having a positive impact on students' behaviour. The number of exclusions has reduced, as has the numbers of lessons disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Students say that bullying in its various forms is rare in the school. They say that, if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and report that the school provides them with information that helps them to keep safe.
- Sixth form students have positive attitudes to learning. The school provides the students with the opportunity to develop their personal, social and leadership skills by encouraging them to get involved in a wide range of whole-school activities; for example, helping younger students to read and participating in music and drama productions. The students are also involved in organising events for the school and the community, and in raising funds for charity.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school's improvement, which is shared with all staff. Leaders are highly focused on improving teaching and students' achievement. Improvement has further to go, however, because some leaders are very new and some initiatives have not been in place for long enough to have the desired impact.
- Leaders have not done enough to ensure that students and their families understand and

appreciate the importance of regular attendance and of punctuality. They have not ensured that staff are rigorous enough in insisting on students' prompt arrival at the start of lessons.

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has secured a rapid improvement to the standards of behaviour around the school, as the students themselves and staff recognise. He is raising the expectations of students, staff and leaders to what all can achieve.
- The restructuring of staff responsibilities has resulted in leaders being held responsible for the work of those they manage and has already improved the proportion of teaching judged good or better, especially in mathematics and science.
- New appointments this term are already making a positive impact on achievement. For example, changes to the curriculum in science are ensuring students are more involved in their learning. These leaders have good support, training and mentoring from a senior member of staff and from the local authority. This is all helping to raise aspirations and achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Leaders know the school well and accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and achievement. They monitor students' achievements and progress well, holding very accurate data, and are using this to drive forward teaching and achievement. Joint observations with inspectors confirmed the accuracy of leaders' judgements and insights.
- Data is now used by all leaders to identify any underachievement and provide additional support where this is needed. Leaders now set more challenging targets for students throughout the school, and both staff and students are rising to the challenge of these. For example, progress in subjects, including in mathematics and English in Key Stage 3, has accelerated and is similar now to that expected nationally. More students in Key Stage 4 are on track to attain the higher grades, including those in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum is supportive of students' interests and learning needs. Leaders have modified the Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure that students take a full range of subjects and to better excite students' interest. The progress of students in Year 7 science lessons has improved, for example, as a result of the new curriculum introduced in September. In Key Stage 4, students are offered a broad range of GCSE and vocational subjects, including the opportunity to take the English Baccalaureate.
- Students receive helpful guidance from careers advisers and school staff. The advice given enables them to make informed choices about their options throughout the school and at age 16.
- Good provision is made for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, students have the opportunity to attend a range of trips, including residential experience. Links with Cambridge University help raise students' aspirations. They have leadership opportunities and experience cultural events. All these activities provide the students with the skills and attitudes needed to contribute to life in modern Britain.
- Senior and subject leaders make sure that teachers have challenging targets, linked to students' progress but with appropriate support and training to secure these. This is all helping to raise standards. If teachers do not meet their targets, the headteacher and governors do not reward them with a pay increase.

- The newly appointed head of sixth form has quickly and accurately evaluated sixth form performance. Students' learning opportunities are enlarged by consortium links, which provide a good range of academic and vocational qualifications. Students receive helpful guidance in writing personal statements to support their applications for university or work-based employment. All students leaving the sixth form continue into apprenticeships, higher education or employment.
- New systems of tracking students' progress in the sixth form lead to the provision of rapid help for any who are falling behind with their work. Improved examination results in 2013 indicate the successful impact of the measures being taken. More students stayed on into Year 13 last year, demonstrating the increased aspiration among sixth form students.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are contributing much to the school's improvement and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They are supporting the headteacher well in raising achievement; for example, by checking carefully on how the work of the English department is raising achievement in the subject. Governors ensure close links between pay and performance for all staff. They visit the school regularly to monitor its work and improvement, using a schedule that ensures that they focus on the key identified priorities for development during these visits. They keep up to date through regular training.
 - Governors analyse and understand the school's data on students' attainment and progress and actively hold leaders to account for the school's performance. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and check on whether it is helping to close the gap in achievement between these students and their peers. They are very aware that there are still some students who are not making enough progress and they are determined to rectify this. Governors ensure that the school is financially secure and that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

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	117512
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	429608

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	684
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Sanvoisin
Headteacher	Scott Martin
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2011
Telephone number	01442 406020
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