

# Ian Ramsey Church of England Aided Comprehensive School

Greens Lane, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, TS18 5AJ

**Inspection dates** 13–14 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
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.

- Students' achievement is inadequate. Since the last inspection, students' standards of attainment and progress have steadily declined, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The progress rates of different groups of students, particularly boys and the most able, are inconsistent. As a result, too few students reach the standards they are capable of by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Teaching is inadequate. Teachers' expectations are too low, particularly of the most able students. There is not enough good teaching to help students make up the ground they have lost in their learning over time.
- The progress of some students is hampered because behaviour is not consistently good in lessons. Students do not always display positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Since the last inspection, the school's overall effectiveness has declined. Senior leaders have not developed the skills of subject leaders and consequently teaching quality is not improving quickly enough.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have an over-optimistic view of how well the school is doing. They are not effective enough in checking on, or challenging teachers about, the performance of different groups of students, for example, boys and the most able.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teachers have responded well to recent training and coaching and they are keen to develop their practice.
- Students feel safe in the school.
- The school has worked successfully to improve attendance.
- Students' spiritual, social and cultural development is promoted well in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 41 lessons and parts of lessons. Three observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and members of the leadership team. A work scrutiny was conducted jointly with four members of the leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, two groups of teaching staff, including subject leaders, six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors spoke with many students in lessons, at breaks and during lunchtimes. They also listened to students read in Year 7 and spoke formally to three groups of students.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school’s improvement plan, the school’s own evaluation of its work, data for tracking students’ progress, students’ work and documents relating to safeguarding, quality of teaching and teachers’ professional development.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of the school’s own surveys, the 232 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 45 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Griffiths, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julie Rimmer	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector
Bernard Clark	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), 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

- Ian Ramsey Church of England Aided Comprehensive School is slightly larger than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those whose parents are in the forces, and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most students are of White British heritage. A smaller-than-average proportion of students speak English as an additional language and, of these, a small minority are at the early stages of learning the language.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school uses off-site educational providers from the local authority's Bishopton Centre, Middlesbrough College and Stockton Riverside College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is having a new build on the existing site, which is scheduled for completion in September 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics, to be typically good or better and so raise students' achievement and accelerate their progress, by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students are capable of, particularly the most able and boys, by providing the right level of challenge in lessons to help them achieve their potential
  - making sure that marking in all subjects consistently gives clear advice to students about how to improve their work and that this advice is systematically followed up by both students and teachers
  - encouraging students to think more deeply when responding to questions in lessons
  - ensuring that behaviour is consistently good in all lessons
  - consistently setting regular and relevant homework that encourages students to develop their thinking and practise their skills
  - ensuring the very recent improvement in achievement in English and mathematics is maintained and secured as a result of consistently good teaching, so that students make progress that is at least in line with national averages
  - ensuring that the school's new data and tracking systems are strengthened so they are understood by all teachers and students and are used to identify what needs to be done to

improve students' achievement, particularly for boys, the most able, and those supported by the pupil premium

- ensuring teachers apply the policies for literacy and numeracy consistently across the school so that all students make better progress in developing their writing and number skills.

■ Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:

- ensuring that all leaders and managers, including governors, accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and plan and put into place a set of actions for improvement that are consistently applied and acted upon by all staff
- making sure that leaders at all levels are equally rigorous in monitoring teaching and learning, challenging teachers about the performance of different groups of students, and that all staff consistently apply the school's systems and policies for improvement
- sharing more widely the good practice that currently exists in the school so that all teachers learn from it
- continuing to develop subject leaders skills so that they are consistently using the information from the checks they do on the quality of teaching and students' work to plan for rapid improvements
- ensuring that governors hold school leaders to account rigorously for their performance.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students join the school in Year 7 with standards that are generally well above average. Most students do not make enough progress, particularly in English and mathematics, during their time in the school. Consequently, their achievement by the end of Year 11 is inadequate.
- Too much variation exists in the progress of different groups of students, particularly the most able and boys, across a number of subjects.
- Standards of attainment have declined since the previous inspection. In the 2013 examinations, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was average, despite students entering the school with skills and abilities that are generally well above average.
- Rates of progress made by students in English and mathematics have not been consistently good enough in recent years. The number of students making expected and more than expected progress in English was low in 2013. Although there was a small improvement in rate of progress in mathematics in 2013, the progress students made was still below expectations. Current data in English and mathematics show that too many students in Year 11 have not made adequate progress since they joined the school in Year 7.
- Progress varies too much across subjects. Teaching over time does not cater for different abilities, particularly the most able and, as a result, some students are not making sufficient progress. The most able students are not challenged sufficiently by the work they are given. In a mathematics lesson, for example, students made inadequate progress because the work they were given was too easy and students said they had completed similar work in primary school. Overall, in many subjects, too few students gain the highest grades at GCSE given their starting points.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills in all subjects. Where students do benefit from this, for example in a history lesson where students were observed reading complex texts and working on an extended piece of writing, they learn new skills and make progress at a good rate. On too many occasions, and in too many subjects, however, opportunities to develop writing and number skills are missed.
- The small number of students with English as an additional language or those from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with similar students across the country.
- Students supported by pupil premium funding make inadequate progress. In 2013, the gaps in performance between students known to be eligible for free school meals and other students were wide, particularly in English and mathematics. In mathematics, for example, these students left school in 2013 one grade behind those students who were not eligible, and this was similar in 2012. In English, the gap narrowed to two-thirds of a grade, although the main reason for this was due to the underperformance of students not eligible for the funding.
- The pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding, to help those who join the school with lower-than-average reading ages, is now being used to target specific students and to promote equality of opportunity. While this is successful in some areas, it is unsuccessful in others. For example, a minority of the students who joined the school in Year 7 and who have been targeted for reading support have made very little progress since they started.
- The progress of the few students who access education in alternative provision is monitored to ensure that they leave the school with the skills they need to help them find employment or further training.
- In 2013, early entry was used for two-thirds of Year 11 students in GCSE mathematics. Only one student achieved the highest grade. The school did not use early entry, in the winter of 2013, for current students.
- The number of disabled students and those with special educational needs in the school is small. Provision for these students is effective in ensuring that they make progress, which is at least in line with similar students across the country.

- There have been very recent improvements in the achievement of students in some subjects, most notably in biology, chemistry, physics and history. This is a result of students being given work that is suitable and provides them with the right level of challenge they need to help them achieve their best, but these improvements are not evident in other key subjects.

### **The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- Teaching over time is inadequate and, consequently, too many students are not making the progress they should, particularly in English and mathematics. There is too much teaching that is not yet good enough to make sure that students achieve well and make rapid gains in their learning. A small amount of inadequate teaching was evident during the inspection.
- Too few students, particularly the most able, go on to succeed in line with their potential because there is too much variability in the quality of teaching, both within subjects and across the school. For example, in a languages lesson, the most able students did not make good progress because they were not given the opportunity to use their prior learning to build more complex language.
- In far too many lessons, teachers do not use information on students' progress to plan activities which engage all students and keep them learning for the whole lesson. The most able learners, in particular, are not challenged by work that is hard enough.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. There are some good examples of students being given good advice about what they need to do to improve but too few teachers insist that students respond to the advice they are given. As a result, students often continue to make the same mistakes. In the best examples seen, students act on the advice given by teachers and their skills improve as a result.
- Homework is not set often enough in a number of subjects to help students develop their thinking and practise their skills. For example, homework is not regularly given in mathematics and some students told inspectors they are rarely given any. Homework planners showed that too many teachers are not setting homework to provide extra challenge for students.
- Students' thinking is not always stretched in lessons; too often they are not encouraged to think deeply because the quality of questions is variable. This is in contrast with some effective practice, where teachers skilfully question and challenge students to provide fuller explanations; this improves their learning and understanding. For example, in an English lesson where students' learning was strong, those students with weak literacy skills made rapid progress because the teacher used questioning effectively to help them develop their vocabulary, which they then applied to an extended piece of writing.
- Not enough students take a pride in their work because some teachers have low expectations of whether students finish their work and how well they present it. As a result of this, work is not always completed and presentation is sloppy in some books. Students are not given enough opportunity to take responsibility for organising their own learning.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are generally well supported by teaching assistants and other support staff in lessons and, as a result of this, they generally make expected progress. This was observed in a mathematics lesson where a small group of students made good progress because the teaching assistant used well-chosen questions to help students understand how to work out the area of compound shapes.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. The progress of some groups of students is being held back because behaviour is not consistently good. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 11 some students commented that, as a result of a succession of different teachers, behaviour was not consistently good and they were not making sufficient progress.
- When interviewed, some Key Stage 3 students also reported that there is some poor behaviour which is hindering their progress, particularly in mathematics and French. This was observed by

inspectors in a small number of lessons during the inspection. Some parents expressed concern in the online survey, Parent View, that not all students are well behaved in the school.

- The newly introduced sanctions and rewards system is appreciated by students, particularly in Key Stage 3. The system is not having the same good impact on some older students.
- Students do not consistently display positive attitudes to learning. In a few lessons, inspectors observed that students are content to follow routines, but some sit back and let others do the work or answer the questions. Where teaching is having a positive impact, students are well motivated, maintain high levels of interest, and show respect and courtesy to each other and their teachers. Not all students, however, take care with the presentation of their work, the quality of which varies between subjects and teachers, with some work being very untidy and disorganised.
- The school is managing the site well during the new building works and students take care with the environment. There is no litter inside or around the school grounds and it is free from graffiti. Students move from one site to the other purposefully and they are generally punctual to lessons. The vast majority of students follow the school uniform policy and their appearance is smart.
- Behaviour around the school is invariably good natured. Students are polite, welcoming and mostly well motivated for their own success.
- Attendance has improved. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance and punctuality. The number of students who are persistently absent has dropped significantly. This is because the school has better systems to monitor and track attendance trends. As a result of this, the school is able to work with individual students and families to improve attendance.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. They have good knowledge of all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to prevent it and deal with it. They are also confident that should an incident occur the staff would manage it well.
- The school works well with alternative providers of education to ensure that students feel safe and that they behave well and attend regularly.

## **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that teaching and achievement are improving rapidly. As a result, students' performance in many subjects, particularly English and mathematics, and the performance of the most able, has declined since the last inspection, when the school was judged to be good.
- Not all subject leaders check whether their teams are consistently using the information about students' progress to plan effectively or that school policies are being carried out consistently. This is because senior leaders are not developing the skills of subject leaders at a fast enough rate and they are not always holding them to account when teachers fail to carry out the agreed procedures. In English, for example, the opportunities provided for students to improve their work from the feedback teachers give them are not always followed up by students.
- Leaders give positive aspects of the school's work more prominence than weaker areas when judging the school's effectiveness. As a result, the judgements the school is making about itself are not accurate enough.
- Leaders' views of teaching are largely gained from observing lessons and do not take sufficient account of the impact of teaching on students' progress over time. Senior leaders who jointly observed lessons with inspectors generally made accurate and rigorous judgements. However, the school's records of the quality of teaching do not focus well enough on the progress different groups of students make, particularly the most able, and pay too much attention to the activities teachers ask them to undertake. As a result, judgements about teaching over time are too generous and the senior leadership team has an over generous view of the quality of teaching.
- School leaders do not always have an accurate view of how well gaps are closing between those students who are supported by the pupil premium and other students in the school. This is because they do not analyse in detail the impact of how the money is being spent.

- The performance management system, together with the general timetable of training for staff, has been improved and these developments have been well received by many staff. However, although teachers are able to see the best teaching that the school has to offer, leaders and managers do not always insist that good practice observed is subsequently adopted by all teachers.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have put in place systems to promote improvement and to check on the quality of teaching. However, there are weaknesses in how the actions are carried out and in how the information gathered is analysed and used.
- The range of academic and vocational courses and alternative options is broad enough to meet the different needs of students. The curriculum is kept under review and is modified when necessary to help meet students' needs. For example, extra time has been allocated in Year 11 for the teaching of mathematics. It is too early to say if this and other actions are having an impact on how students achieve. Additional approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy across all subjects are at an early stage and teachers do not consistently apply the relevant school policies.
- Students' spiritual, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Students often have the opportunity to reflect on and consider their spiritual development and this is supported by a programme of assemblies and personal, social and health education. The Christian ethos of the school underpins much of the work that takes place. For example, students respond well to fund raising events to help relieve suffering and misfortune in other parts of the world. Students work successfully to raise money on an annual basis to send to their link school in Lesotho. This positive aspect of the school's work is undermined, however, by pockets of inconsistent behaviour in a small number of lessons.
- Students work well with each other and show consideration. They appreciate the extra time spent by the teachers who help with extra-curricular activities.
- The local authority works closely with the school and has helped it to review its position in light of the disappointing 2013 examination results. The local authority, however, has an over-optimistic view of how well students have achieved.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors do not hold the leaders effectively to account for the performance of the school. They have not sufficiently challenged the underachievement in recent years. The governing body has not asked searching enough questions about the decline in the school's performance and students' poor progress. Nor have they questioned the accuracy of the school's assessments of how well it is doing.
  - There is little evidence of governors holding the school's leaders rigorously to account, particularly in terms of students' achievement and the quality of teaching. A number of teachers have progressed through the pay scales even though their teaching has been weak. Although the school is tackling this now, and some teachers have left, progress to ensure all teachers are performing well is too slow.
  - Performance management of senior leaders has not led to rapid improvement in teaching and achievement. Governors have supported school leaders in tackling the weakest teaching but their remains too much teaching that is not yet good enough.
  - Governors are very supportive and take their roles and responsibilities very seriously.
  - Governors ensure that the school's systems for safeguarding students 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111764
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	440809

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	June Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 585205
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