

Alderman White School and Language College

Chilwell Lane, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3DU

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders and the board of directors have not yet secured good progress in all subjects, especially in mathematics. This means that not all students achieve as well as they could.
- Progress targets set for students by senior leaders are not always high enough. This sometimes limits teachers' expectations of what students can do.
- Disadvantaged students do not achieve as well as other students in the school, or other students nationally.
- Leaders' evaluations are not sharply enough focused on the most important areas that need improvement. Consequently, academic achievement in the sixth form has received insufficient attention.
- The sixth form requires improvement because standards are not high enough, and achievement on academic courses lags behind that on vocational ones. Attendance in the sixth form has declined.
- The quality of teaching varies markedly between subjects. Questioning is not used often enough to deepen students' understanding or stimulate their curiosity. Marking does not always help students to improve their work. Students describe some lessons as dull.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' progress is now accelerating in English, following a strong focus on literacy.
- Students make good progress in modern foreign languages, and strengths in this area are used to involve the local community and broaden cultural awareness.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities, both in timetabled lessons and outside.
- Students' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. They behave well in lessons and during social times, and take pride in their work.
- The school promotes strong spiritual, moral and social values, including respect for people from different cultural backgrounds. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students, parents and staff have confidence in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 42 lessons taught by 40 different teachers; nine observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited an assembly, and observed children’s conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, other leaders, class teachers, and directors of the federation.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students, including three selected at random, and spoke with many others informally, particularly in class. Inspectors listened to students reading in some lessons.
- In lessons, inspectors looked in depth at books and other work, and scrutinised data on students’ targets and current levels of attainment.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both on paper and online. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of directors’ meetings; case studies; policies; safeguarding records; records of students’ attainment and progress; and school publicity and newsletters.
- Inspectors took into account the 89 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and letters from parents. They also considered the 33 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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Full report

Information about this school

- Alderman White School and Language College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It incorporates post-16 provision, known as Bramcote College.
- Alderman White School and Language College converted to become an academy on 1 October 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a member of the White Hills Park Federation Trust, which also includes Bramcote School. A single governing body for both schools is known as the board of directors. The executive headteacher leads both schools.
- Four fifths of students are of White British heritage, with the others coming from several different ethnic groups. About one in seven of the students speak English as an additional language.
- About one in 15 students is disabled or has special educational needs. This proportion is below average.
- A quarter of students are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. This proportion is in line with the national average.
- A very small number of students in Key Stage 4 have recently taken up full-time placements at Stone Soup Academy, a local free school which offers alternative educational provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students.
- The executive headteacher took up his post in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, by:
 - ensuring that work is sufficiently challenging in all lessons for students to make rapid progress
 - providing regular opportunities for students to deepen their understanding
 - making sure that marking, particularly in mathematics, always identifies what students need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that all students have ambitious targets which are updated regularly
 - using the skills of the best teachers in a systematic way to develop rapidly the effectiveness of their colleagues
 - amending plans so they provide the basis for an effective and timely response to key areas of weakness.
- Raise standards in the sixth form so that progress on academic courses at least matches that on vocational courses by:
 - ensuring all students attend regularly and are punctual to lessons
 - checking on students' progress regularly, and supporting effectively those at risk of falling behind.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet ensured that progress in all subjects is consistently good, nor eliminated the marked variation between the effectiveness of different departments. In particular, standards in mathematics are holding the school back.
- Senior leaders understand and interpret student data accurately but do not focus with sufficient clarity and urgency on areas of weakness. In documents seen by inspectors, for example, little consideration had been given to the performance of sixth-form students and how it could be improved. Senior leaders accurately interpreted detailed aspects of how students were learning during joint observations of lessons, but inspectors found their overall assessment of students' progress was too generous.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching in English and mathematics for disadvantaged students who are at risk of falling behind, and to fund mentor support. However, the school's evaluation does not explain why expenditure has had only a limited impact on closing the gap in students' achievement. Planning for this group of students lacks ambition and urgency.
- Leaders set targets for students' progress that are well understood by teachers and students but, in several examples noted by inspectors throughout the school, they were not ambitious enough to encourage students to achieve their highest potential.
- The school has made an outline decision about its preferred approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels. In the meantime, subject leaders have improved the accuracy of teachers' assessments by using tests across a complete year group and checking the outcomes for consistency. Standards at Key Stage 3 are not checked reliably against those in other schools.
- The school's curriculum is broad, and provides exciting extra opportunities. Students appreciate the provision of language courses after school and on Saturdays, reflecting the school's specialism. A wealth of artistic and sports clubs and additional examination courses are available, and take-up is high.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very strongly, both through the regular curriculum and through visits from appropriate outside agencies. A modern studies course explicitly addresses British values and cultural diversity.
- Students receive effective guidance from Year 8 onwards on the next steps in their education or careers. Aspirations are raised by visits to prestigious universities, made available free of charge to disadvantaged students.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Staff keep meticulous records, and show tenacity in securing the involvement of other agencies to help vulnerable students. They work effectively with parents, including those who are initially wary of the school. A senior leader has recently visited Stone Soup Academy to make sure that it provides a safe environment for students placed there.
- Targets are now set for teachers that depend on students' progress in all their classes. The results are used to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that training is helping them to improve. Subject leaders are beginning to share best practice across subjects, but it is too soon to judge the impact of this initiative.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The new executive headteacher has ensured that the directors receive detailed, timely information on students' achievement, the quality of teaching and how students' performance compares with others' nationally. As a result, the board of directors is now effectively overseeing the school. Directors know how the pupil premium funding is spent. They are now holding senior leaders to account, and - despite some lack of urgency - providing an increasing level of challenge. They have a clear and convincing vision for the school as a place where students and everyone in the wider community have excellent

learning opportunities. They actively promote cohesion, for example, by celebrating the achievements of students who speak English as an additional language.

- Directors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding. They manage the pay and performance of the executive headteacher and other staff effectively, making sure that pay increases are awarded only on the basis of teachers' performance. They ensure the school stays within its budget. Directors make sure that they are fully trained for their roles.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students, including those in the sixth form, approach their learning with commitment and enthusiasm, bring the right equipment to class and present their work neatly. They understand how their behaviour contributes to learning, and they respect the clear rules for conduct. They collaborate effectively in lessons. Students report that disruption in lessons is rare, and that new school procedures to support those who misbehave are working well.
- Students' conduct at social times is orderly and responsible, despite congestion in the dining room, and they respond well to the low-key supervision. They respect the school's facilities, and treat adults politely, although not all students apologise when they are late to lessons.
- The school records behavioural incidents carefully. There have been few incidents of a racist nature, and only one example of homophobia, and the school has responded with an appropriate degree of seriousness. During the last year, the school has not excluded a student permanently, and the rate of fixed-term exclusion has declined and is low.
- In a small minority of lessons that fail to engage students fully, some talk across the teacher and take a little time to respond to the teacher's requests for attention.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Child protection procedures are robust. Senior staff are aware of the various risks to student safety, including those related to extremism, and take decisive action when needed. The school involves other agencies promptly to support vulnerable students. All necessary policies and risk assessments are in place.
- Students say that they feel very safe in school, and their parents agree. They report that bullying is very rare, and that the school resolves any problems swiftly. They are well informed about different types of risk, including how to stay safe in public places and the risks posed by the internet.
- The school follows up assiduously on absence, and attendance in Key Stages 3 and 4 has improved. It is now above average overall, and for vulnerable groups of students. However, attendance in the sixth form has fallen to 89% this academic year, compared with 92% over the same period last year.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching shows distinct variation between subjects and different year groups. Over time, teaching has not ensured that students make consistently good progress in some subjects, especially in mathematics. Weaknesses in sixth-form teaching have led to underachievement on some academic courses. Students make slow progress when their work is insufficiently challenging and when marking does not regularly provide clear guidance on how to improve it. A small minority of books show work graded inaccurately.
- Targets set centrally for students are not ambitious enough and this means that teachers' expectations of students are too low. These low expectations place a ceiling on learning for some students.
- Teachers use questioning to check students' understanding, but rarely to challenge superficial answers, encourage reflection or arouse curiosity. As a result, students do not always deepen their understanding as fully as they might. Marking, especially in mathematics, does not always help students to improve their

work.

- Relationships between teachers and students are evidently strong but, in a small minority of lessons, tasks are not planned well enough to engage students completely. In these circumstances, although they remain compliant, students' learning tails off.
- Provision for disadvantaged students is inconsistent. Sometimes those disadvantaged students who are at risk of falling behind are provided with extra work to help them catch up, but at other times they do not receive all the help they need.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and students who speak English as an additional language, learn well. Work builds on their prior learning and takes into consideration how they are best able to learn.
- Leaders in modern foreign languages, English, and design and technology have created a strong learning culture in which students feel challenged and even inspired to give of their best. In these subjects, planning ensures that the work for all students stretches them, and marking consistently provides detailed feedback on how students can do better. As these approaches are used in other subjects, for example in science in the main school, the quality of teaching is improving. Homework, including extended projects, complements classroom learning effectively.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and teachers insist on the correct use of subject-specific words. Literacy is promoted effectively; there is due attention to spelling and punctuation in students' books, reading is popular and students are orally articulate. However, although inspectors saw students using their mathematical skills effectively in other subjects, there is no consistent approach to numeracy, for example in how to perform and set out calculations or draw graphs.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students start the school with attainment that is broadly average. They leave with attainment across the full range of subjects which is also broadly average. Achievement requires improvement because progress is not yet good in mathematics, and not consistently so in some other subjects. Attainment in academic courses in the sixth form is below the national average.
- In 2013, the last validated results at GCSE level, progress in mathematics and humanities subjects was below the national average. Data supplied by the school indicate that progress in these subjects improved in 2014 but the proportion of students making the expected progress in mathematics remained too low.
- In 2013, disadvantaged students left the school on average almost one and a quarter grades behind other students in English, and one and a half grades in mathematics. Compared with all students nationally, they attained just over one grade lower in English, and one and two third grades lower in mathematics. School data show that, in 2014, gaps in attainment were still too wide, although the progress of disadvantaged students was catching up.
- Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs has been reorganised to give priority to those who need it most, and staff are well informed about how these students learn best. As a result, these students make good progress. Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been spent largely on specialist literacy teaching, and this has been effective in English and mathematics for students with the very lowest prior attainment. However, it has had an uneven impact on those who enter the school at a slightly higher level.
- The curriculum allows the most-able students to study a second modern foreign language, and they are rewarded by points towards their graduation for taking up additional subjects such as Latin or product design after school. The school now uses early entry for a relatively small number of the most-able students, with a view to offering further challenging qualifications in Year 11. This does not reduce their chances of attaining the top grades. In 2013, their attainment compared with similar students nationally was broadly average. School data indicate that the most-able students in the current Year 11 are on track

to make good progress in key subjects. However, their targets are not always ambitious enough to encourage them to do even better.

- Students speaking English as an additional language generally make good progress in learning English, and those who enter the school with low levels of prior attainment catch up rapidly with their peers. The school's use of Stone Soup Academy as alternative provision is very recent, and it is too early to judge its impact on student achievement.
- The proportion of students gaining the English Baccalaureate has been average, and rose markedly in 2014, as a higher proportion of students followed more traditional subjects. Students' progress in modern foreign languages is consistently good, and strong progress was also seen in English, technology and science in 2014. The school's tracking of students, which indicates that progress is now accelerating across subjects, matches inspection findings.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The sixth form draws most of its students from the main school and the other school in the federation. Numbers are rising. The average attainment on entry to the sixth form has been a little lower than average. Some students follow a purely vocational pathway, most study for academic qualifications, and some study a mix of qualifications.
- In 2013, the last validated results at Level 3, attainment and progress on academic courses were broadly average, but were below average in some subjects, and so achievement in the sixth form required improvement. However, students on vocational courses achieved well, and their attainment and progress were above the national average. In 2013, the school met the 16–19 interim minimum standards.
- Data supplied by the school indicate that, in 2014, overall attainment in Year 13 fell back in both vocational and academic courses and improvement is still needed. Results on some AS and A2 courses were poor, especially in science. The proportion of students retaking their GCSE in English and mathematics who attained an A*–C grade was above average, when compared to national figures for 2013.
- Documents seen by inspectors do not explain the disparity in performance between vocational and academic subjects, show no evidence that students' progress has been tracked rigorously and do not provide a coherent plan to accelerate progress and raise attainment. The leadership and management of the sixth form therefore requires improvement.
- Attendance in the sixth form has declined this academic year, and some classes observed were poorly attended. Several students were late to lessons, and this went unchallenged by teachers. However, students' attitudes to learning in the sixth form are generally positive. In conversation with inspectors, sixth-form students were appreciative of their study programmes and the school's guidance in taking the next steps in their careers. An above-average proportion of students stay on to see their courses through to completion, reflecting a strong commitment from the school. All leavers in 2014 were accepted on university courses or found employment, apprenticeships or further Level 3 study.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement because it varies too much. Attainment targets set by senior leaders are often too low, and some students have negotiated more demanding targets with their subject teachers. Students make good progress in some lessons, growing in confidence as they tackle increasingly complex ideas. However, in others, limited expectations lead to a sluggish pace and work that provides insufficient challenge.

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	138832
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	449252

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	840
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Launchbury
Executive Headteacher	Paul Heery
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0115 9170424
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