

Charnwood College (High)

Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, LE11 4SQ

Inspection dates 3–4 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Levels of achievement vary considerably across different subject areas. In science a few students make slower progress than they do in other subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics has not been good over time.
- The school's most able students do not achieve highly in several subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently check and clarify students' understanding before moving on to the next stage of learning.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that the comments they make, or the challenges they set in written feedback, are responded to by students. Therefore, this process does not have a good impact and means that a few students are not totally clear about how to improve their work.
- A minority of students behave poorly, both in lessons and when moving around the school site. Exclusion rates are rather high. A new behaviour policy is in place to help members of staff address this but it has not had time to have a full impact.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal, senior and middle leaders, and the governing body have successfully improved the school, particularly with regards to the quality of teaching.
- The improved quality of teaching has led to increased student achievement in several subjects. Students make very good progress in English as well as design.
- Recently achievement in mathematics has improved and so the progress students make is now in line with that seen nationally.
- The achievement gaps in English and mathematics between disadvantaged students and others are smaller than those seen nationally.
- Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students learning in 21 lessons taught by 20 different teachers. Almost all of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, and two members of the governing body. The lead inspector conducted a telephone interview with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector spoke with students in a meeting as well as informally in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan, data on students' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations on the quality of teaching and governors' reports.
- Inspectors reviewed a selection of work in students' books.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to produce any data. However, inspectors took into account the 107 responses to a school questionnaire from parents of students in Year 7 and Year 9. This questionnaire used exactly the same questions as those found in Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian McNeilly, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

William Cassell

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Charnwood College (High) is a smaller than average secondary school for students aged 11-14. It federated under a single Principal and governing body with Charnwood College (Upper), which is a 14-18 school, in September 2012. The two providers operate as one school, share the same campus and have the same teaching staff. The two schools are planning to merge formally.
- Just over a third of students receive pupil premium funding. This is more than the national average. This additional government funding is for children looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The majority of students are White British with a significant proportion from Indian backgrounds.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at Autism Outreach and the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership.
- Support is provided to the school by three National Leaders of Education from Thomas Estley Community College, Leicester; Ashmount School, Loughborough; and Trinity School, Nottingham.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement by:
 - ensuring the good progress made by students in some areas extends to all subjects, especially in science
 - increasing the rate of progress made by the most able students, particularly through increasing the level of challenge
 - building on recent improvements in achievement seen in mathematics.
- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers check and clarify students' understanding in lessons before moving on to the next stage of learning
 - increasing the effectiveness of the written feedback teachers give students by insisting on a response where one has been requested.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring the school's behaviour policy is consistently applied in order to reduce exclusions, improve students' attitudes to learning, and their conduct when moving around the school site.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal leads an improving school. He has created an atmosphere where his members of staff are ambitious for the students in their care. The Principal, senior and middle leaders are keen to improve their own practice and they have been successful in this regard.
- The school's self-evaluation processes are honest and self-critical. This has been a key feature of the school's recent improvements. For example, nearly all the areas of development from the last inspection have been successfully addressed.
- The vice-principal with responsibility for achievement and the assistant principal with responsibility for the quality of teaching have made significant improvements in their areas.
- The vice-principal made radical changes to the school's timetable which took effect at the start of this academic year. Classes shared between more than one teacher have reduced from three-quarters to one in seven. This has had a positive effect on the experience of teachers and students, particularly through establishing better continuity and relationships.
- The system through which the progress made by students is assessed has improved hugely since the school was last inspected. Individual teachers, through their faculty leaders and, in turn, the senior leadership team, are held to account effectively not only for the progress their students are making but for the accuracy of the data they produce. This, supported by regular and rigorous external moderation, means that leaders have a much more accurate view of student progress which, in turn, leads to more effective improvement planning.
- A combination of accurate monitoring, effective performance management and professional development opportunities has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching. All senior leaders who conducted joint lesson observations with inspectors could readily and accurately identify key strengths and, where applicable, areas for improvement.
- The head of the mathematics department, supported by her colleagues, has overseen significant improvements in the achievement of students in this subject.
- The head of the English department leads a group of teachers who continue to ensure very good outcomes for their students.
- The actions of senior and middle leaders, including through the use of the pupil premium funding, has contributed to ensuring that the achievement of disadvantaged students has improved over time, including in mathematics and English.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles and are increasingly involved in whole-school activities beyond their own subject areas, such as evaluating the quality of students' books and improving the quality of teaching through mentoring and coaching. They also oversee and are held to account for the quality of the data produced by the teachers they manage.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and appropriate. Students who are identified as needing to improve their literacy skills are given extra lessons to work on these.
- The curriculum – and opportunities beyond the curriculum – contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's system of dealing with behaviour incidents makes a significant contribution to the first three of these elements. When these behaviour incidents arise, students have an option to address issues through group discussion; this is effective in encouraging students to consider their actions, the effects they have on others and the difference between right and wrong. This promotes an acceptance of common British values, as does the promotion of the rule of law and the democratic process through the student council, the house system and mixed age tutor groups. Sporting interests are very well catered for. There are 27 physical activities that students can take

advantage of on an extra-curricular basis. As well as the more traditional options, less usual pursuits such as parcour and quidditch are available. There are opportunities to consider one's own culture and those of others through assemblies and religious education lessons.

- The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relations and tackles discrimination. The system to deal with behaviour incidents, the tutoring system and personal development sessions all contribute to this. Members of staff do not accept the use of discriminatory language.
- The school employs a specialist member of staff to provide careers advice and guidance. He offers a drop-in service, supports students with their option choices and provides further information when required. Thorough records are kept of contact and advice, though the school does not fully analyse the impact of the latter.
- Members of staff, including the Principal, monitor closely the very small number of students who attend alternative provision. This includes personal visits to the providers.
- The support provided by the local authority has been regular and effective. The local authority representative has provided direction and advice on a variety of aspects including: how best to compile and use progress data; scrutiny of students' work; coaching to develop leadership skills of staff; judging the quality of teaching; and governor support. This variety of work has had a positive impact on improving the school, and the local authority representative effectively identifies areas for further improvement.
- Senior leaders have taken advantage of external support from a number of sources. The Thomas Estley Learning Alliance, in particular, has offered effective and extensive support and advice, most notably through moderating and quality assuring the school's assessment processes. Led by a National Leader of Education (NLE), the Alliance has also provided opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practitioners, and has provided lead practitioners to support the school's staff development programme. Two other NLEs have provided the Principal with support. A senior leader from Trinity School in Nottingham supported the vice-principal in his necessary timetabling work.
- Senior leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy but this is not being used consistently by all members of staff. As a result, behaviour has not improved as much as it could.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes its responsibilities very seriously and carries out its functions well. Governors have made a clear contribution to the improvement of the school by holding senior leaders to account for their actions on a very regular basis. Governors visit the school often for a variety of purposes, including attending meetings with students and teachers to discuss their experiences. Governors attend fortnightly meetings where the quality of students' work is assessed, so that individual governors can form their own opinions on whether improvements are taking place. If governors feel they require more information, they submit written questions to senior leaders in order to better consider the responses. Governors are well-informed about school data, the quality of teaching in the school, the progress being made by students and the areas where both teaching and achievement require improvement. Governors understand the systems used to manage the performance of teachers and a small sub-committee of governors received training to make them more effective in their discussions over teachers' pay progression.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is a noticeable minority of students whose poor behaviour sometimes affects the learning of others in lessons. Although there is a new behaviour policy in place to improve behaviour for learning, it is not being applied consistently by all members of staff. Therefore, although the majority of students behave

well, it is not having as much effect as intended on those who do not. This view was also expressed by students.

- A minority of students behave poorly when moving around the site. Members of staff, including support staff, address this as incidents occur but a number of these students repeat their actions. A significant number of students do not move purposefully to lessons, with the resulting effect that these sessions start later than they should.
- The poor behaviour described and the failure to properly address it in lessons has led to a rate of internal exclusion which is too high. The rate of external exclusions has increased from last year, though it is lower than the academic year ending 2013.
- Most students behave well in lessons and want to learn; some of these become frustrated when their learning is affected.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Rates of persistent absence have declined substantially over the last two years and are now in line with the proportion seen nationally.
- The behaviour of the very small number of students in alternative provision is monitored by members of staff. Should issues arise they are addressed but the in-school data show no concerns in this regard.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Members of staff and students are aware of procedures to follow should any concerns arise about any aspect of safety.
- School policies are thorough, up to date and meet statutory requirements. Leaders responsible for child protection work effectively with other agencies and the school's systems for administering concerns are effective.
- Students generally feel safe. Bullying is infrequent and is dealt with effectively when it occurs. One student told an inspector, 'Racist, homophobic and sexist remarks are classed as extreme behaviour.'
- Students are aware of personal safety issues. They have received guidance on keeping safe, including when using the internet.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching has improved recently, it is not yet securely good enough to ensure that all students make good progress across subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently and regularly check students' understanding before moving on to the next stage of learning. This includes teachers not always clarifying the key points that students have learnt, or the good points raised in discussion by them.
- The written feedback teachers give students is generally good in terms of regularity and detail. However, school policy in this regard is to increase the rates of progress made by students, through developing a conversation between staff and students, including setting extra challenges when it is appropriate. A few teachers are not successfully involving students in this process and, therefore, it is having a rather limited impact.
- The inconsistency in the use of the school's behaviour policy leads to some students' learning being affected in some classes.
- The level of challenge set by teachers has improved, though this still requires improvement for the most

able students.

- Good teaching has ensured that students develop good literacy skills. Recently students have begun to make better progress in mathematics because the teaching is more effective.
- Students take pride in the tasks they complete. The presentation of their work has improved significantly over recent months, as evidenced by a study of past and present books and folders.
- Teachers produce well-designed resources that are thought-provoking and match intended learning objectives. The staff exhibit a good level of subject knowledge when teaching their areas of specialism.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Levels of achievement vary considerably across subjects. Students from all backgrounds perform well in some subjects; the same students then clearly underperform in others. Achievement in science, in particular, requires improvement.
- Achievement in mathematics has not been good over time. In 2013, students underachieved in this subject. Improvements in the quality of teaching in this department led to improved outcomes in 2014, though not enough of the most able students exceeded the progress expected of them. Further improvements are predicted for 2015, and these assessments have been externally checked.
- The school's most able students do not achieve well across all subjects. These students are currently underperforming in science, geography and French.
- In 2014, students achieved particularly well in English, design, French and Spanish. This is because teaching is effective and gets students involved successfully in sessions.
- Although the achievement gap in the school between disadvantaged students and the others remained static in English in 2014 when compared to the previous year, the gap is considerably smaller than that seen nationally. The achievement gap was substantial in mathematics in 2013; this was closed significantly in 2014 and was smaller than that seen nationally.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs varies across subjects. As a group, these students make slightly better progress in English than they do in mathematics.
- Senior leaders and teachers encourage students to read for pleasure. All students are expected to have a reading book with them; for those who do not, teachers provide one for reading time which is timetabled for tutor periods. Adult volunteers and sixth form students read with some students on a weekly basis.
- The funding for Year 7 literacy and mathematics catch-up has been used effectively. It has paid for extra resources and contributed to the funding of intervention work. Targeted students made particularly good progress in mathematics.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of the progress made by the very small number of students in alternative provision indicates that their achievement is generally similar to that of other students, taking into account the range of activities they pursue in these settings.

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	120253
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	447153

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.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donald Wix
Principal	Mark Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2013
Telephone number	01509 554400
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