

Bebington High Sports College

Higher Bebington Road, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside CH63 2PS

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Senior leaders have recently put in place a set of measures to strengthen the school, but these have not yet led to necessary rapid improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation is not used incisively by leaders and governors to effect rapid improvement. They have been too slow to identify and tackle weaknesses and have not averted a sharp decline in the progress of too many pupils.
- Until recently, leaders' and teachers' use of information about pupils' progress has not been reliable, notably in mathematics, science and geography. Pupils' targets are therefore inaccurate and unchallenging, leading to outcomes for some pupils, especially the most able, that are not as high as they should be.
- Leaders and governors have been too slow to capitalise effectively on the good practice that exists across the school, for example in the management of the sixth form.
- Teaching sometimes fails to develop pupils' confidence and resilience to persevere with difficult tasks without support. This, together with variable progress in writing skills, especially for boys, affects pupils' ability to achieve the highest outcomes in examinations.
- Work set for pupils does not always meet pupils' learning needs, interests and aspirations effectively and fails to engage them in their learning. This is because teachers do not check frequently whether pupils are ready to move on.
- The school has not yet eradicated inadequate teaching and some that requires improvement. This weak teaching fails to challenge pupils, especially the most able, so that current pupils do not make the progress they should in mathematics, science and geography.
- Persistent absence is too high, especially among boys, despite efforts by the school to improve attendance.

The school has the following strengths

- Most parents and pupils agree that pupils feel safe and happy in school
- The management of the sixth form and of provision for special educational needs is good.
- The school's work to promote pupils' physical, emotional and mental well-being is a strength.
- Low-ability pupils make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently eradicate the remaining teaching that is inadequate or requires improvement, thereby quickening pupils' attainment and progress by:
 - widening the collaborative work between strong departments such as English and physical education (PE) and weaker subjects, such as mathematics, science and geography, so that pupils write at length in different subjects
 - ensuring that pupils develop confidence and resilience to complete challenging tasks without support, taking pride in their work, so that they are better prepared for examinations
 - making sure that work set is well matched to pupils' interests and aspirations, so that they engage well in their learning
 - increasing the level of challenge for all pupils, but especially for the most-able pupils
 - intensifying the school's already strenuous efforts to reduce absence, especially the persistent absence of some boys.
- Rapidly improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the thoroughness and precision of the school's self-evaluation processes
 - raising expectations across departments of what pupils and teachers can achieve
 - drawing on the successful management structures and processes of the sixth form and special educational needs teams to sharpen practice in checking pupils' progress and the impact of whole-school initiatives, in order to pre-empt any slippage in performance.

Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The failure of the school to improve, as demonstrated by the outcomes in the GCSE examinations of 2015, has led to serious reflection and analysis by leaders and governors. They have been too slow and ineffective in turning round the impact of several years of declining academic performance and weak teaching. This is because they have not kept a close enough eye on each other and on middle leaders to ensure that rigorous and effective quality assurance is taking place at all levels.
- Leaders and governors have now begun to tackle the weaknesses in gathering and using information about pupils' progress, pointed out in several previous inspections. Systems for tracking and reviewing pupils' progress are becoming more robust, especially in English, PE and mathematics, but they are not yet fully tried and tested. Therefore, while some projections about pupils' performance in the current year point towards better outcomes, this is variable across year groups and subjects and must be treated with caution.
- All leaders and governors who met with inspectors show determination to improve the school, and Ofsted's online survey for staff, completed by 41 members of staff, shows them to share their leaders' vision. Senior and middle leaders are now more confident to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress, for example, through departmental reviews in which governors are regularly involved. However, it is too early to judge their impact on the 2016 outcomes for all pupils.
- The current curriculum is broad and balanced, with appropriate courses for key stage 3 pupils. The curriculum has been reviewed to become more academically focused, especially at key stage 4. This is partly to raise pupils' aspirations, particularly of the most-able pupils, and in order to increase the very small proportion of pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate in 2015. This is already having impact for pupils in the current Years 10 and 11.
- Some pupils in Years 9 and 10 who spoke with inspectors are very ambitious to go to university and are clear about the courses they wish to follow. They feel that the school could have provided them with more guidance and information in choosing their options. Other pupils and parents, especially of the most-able pupils, including those who aspire to a medical career, are rightly disappointed that the opportunity to study three separate sciences has been removed from the curriculum.
- Pupils appreciate the rich variety of activities that they can enjoy at lunchtimes and after school. Many, but not all, of these activities are related to sports, as befits the school's strong commitment to promoting pupils' health and well-being. Other activities include dance and musical events, theatre and other educational visits and clubs related to particular subjects.
- At its heart, the school has a genuine desire and commitment to provide an inclusive culture for all pupils in which all can achieve. Several parents who contacted Ofsted or completed its online questionnaire spoke movingly of the difference that the school had made to the life chances of their vulnerable children. The school can point to many pupils who have been unable to settle in other schools, but have remained in full-time education at Bebington High and progressed to further education, training or employment.
- Senior leaders have put in place a well-designed system for checking the quality of teaching and learning, based on regular observations of teaching, reviews of pupils' work and assessment information. Senior leaders can identify the best and weakest teachers and any concerns are followed up and well documented. The school can point to several teachers whose practice has improved as a result of this process. Senior leaders encourage good and outstanding teachers to take further professional qualifications in order to improve teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders and governors use performance management rigorously and are quick to challenge robustly any teachers whose practice fails to improve, for example in science and mathematics. This has removed some weak practice, but caused its own problems of teaching continuity where recruitment is difficult.
- Newly qualified teachers are appreciative of the support that they receive to develop their teaching skills.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Bebington High Sports College became a foundation school supported by a cooperative charitable trust in 2009. The school is also supported by and works in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University, and the Cooperative College. The governing body is the appropriate authority overseeing the day-to-day running of the school.

- Since the previous inspection in 2014, the governing body has been reconstituted and slimmed down for greater effectiveness and efficiency. Governors have audited their skills and several new members have been recruited since September 2015. A national leader of governance has reviewed the practice of the governing body.
 - Current governors are knowledgeable about assessment information and understand clearly the reasons for the school’s decline. They have challenged the headteacher and senior leaders to create a better balance in the curriculum between traditionally popular vocational courses and more academic courses better suited to stretching the most-able pupils.
 - Current governors are well involved in school life and have the educational expertise to weigh information from the school against what they learn from their own visits.
 - Governors are aware of how the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is spent. The impact of their decisions is evident in the fact that pupils who are supported by the Year 7 funding improve their reading skills rapidly, out-performing their peers. Gaps between the progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium and that of other pupils are narrowing steadily.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors work closely with the school and a wide range of external partners to ensure that pupils’ health, safety and security have a high profile within the school. Appropriate and regular training takes place to keep all staff updated.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching over time is not consistently good and there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Senior leaders have invested heavily in appointing new teachers and leaders in subjects where teaching has been weak. However, pupils have suffered from frequent changes of teachers. There has been a reliance on temporary teachers because of difficulties in recruitment, for example in sciences and mathematics. This has meant that pupils have had little continuity in teaching and this has limited their progress. As new teachers and leaders begin to settle into their roles and form positive relationships with their pupils, teaching is growing stronger, but these improvements have yet to show impact on pupils’ long-term progress.
- Where teaching is weak, all pupils do the same work, whatever their level of ability, and teachers are not skilled in gauging when pupils are ready to move on to more complex work. This is partly why the most-able pupils do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Most teachers follow the school’s marking policy consistently, but inspectors concurred with parents who expressed concern about the variable contribution marking makes to pupils’ learning across different subjects.
- Inspectors noted some examples of effective teaching over time, for example, in the sixth form and in mathematics in Years 7 and 8, where the school has strengthened its approach to teaching and learning. In these areas, teachers use questioning not simply to check pupils’ understanding, but to challenge pupils to think more deeply and develop a wider understanding of their work. The school is establishing a stronger culture of hard work, high expectations and engagement in learning in these areas of the school than in other year groups, where a legacy of low expectations and aspirations is gradually being eradicated.
- In English at key stage 3, a strong focus on spelling and grammar supports pupils’ creative writing effectively and pupils have time to practise their speaking skills. This better teaching is beginning to be shared across departments, but it is too recent to show wider impact on pupils’ progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils interviewed by inspectors said that they felt safe in school, and parents who completed Ofsted’s online survey agreed.

- Pupils enjoy their time in school and find their teachers and other adults in school supportive if they have a problem. They show good understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy, for example through membership of the school council. Tolerance and mutually respectful relationships are evident between teachers, pupils and other adults in the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and to help them to protect themselves from a range of risks is strong. All staff are appropriately trained in the government's Prevent duty, and most pupils have some insight into its purpose. Themed days in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and the school's many partnerships with external agencies promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being very effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' behaviour is not good because their attitudes to learning are not always positive. This is most notable when teaching fails to encourage pupils to attempt the most challenging work or when pupils need to develop resilience to tackle complex work without support. When uninspiring teaching fails to engage pupils in their learning, pupils are not all able to maintain their interest and as a result, occasional low-level disruption occurs.
- Pupils' conduct in and around the school is orderly and sensible. They are typically polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils' relationships with their classmates and teachers are characterised by mutual respect.
- Teachers consistently follow the school's rules and systems for managing behaviour effectively. This ensures that pupils know what is expected of them. Nevertheless, 24 of the 33 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed concerns about bullying and poor behaviour. The school's own records of parents' views were more positive. Most pupils told inspectors that bullying and misbehaviour were rare and that adults in school would deal with these quickly if they occurred.
- The school's records show that racist incidents, bullying and homophobic language have reduced since the previous inspection, as have exclusions.
- The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders have taken a firm approach, but they know that too many boys continue to be persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils enter the school with standards that are significantly below average. The school's GCSE results in 2015 were below the government's floor standard. Only 30% of pupils gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, marking a three-year trend of attainment that is significantly below the national average. Very few pupils succeeded in gaining the higher grades or in achieving the English Baccalaureate.
- Results in additional and core science courses, taken by the majority of pupils, were significantly below national expectations, as were outcomes in mathematics. Pupils did not attain well across a range of other subjects, including geography and religious studies, business studies, and art and design. There were, however, some success stories, with above-average overall attainment in English and in applied science.
- Overall, the proportion of pupils who made the progress expected of them in English was broadly in line with the national average but in mathematics, progress was significantly below it. The progress of the most-able pupils declined in both English and mathematics. This is because, while disadvantaged pupils made progress in line with their peers, disadvantaged pupils of average ability and those pupils with high ability did not make as much progress from their starting points compared with other pupils nationally.
- The progress of low-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability was above average in both subjects, reflecting the good care and support that these pupils receive. Well-qualified, well-trained teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the positive outcomes of this group of pupils.
- Girls' progress in both English and mathematics did not compare favourably with that found for girls nationally.
- Senior leaders have taken the opportunity presented by national changes in assessment to put in place stronger systems for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils throughout the school, based on effective practice in English.

- The moderation of tests and examination papers is based on a more robust model, giving senior leaders confidence that standards are now more accurate and point to improving outcomes for some groups. However, the impact of the new system is not yet securely established across all subjects and year groups, and its impact was not consistently evident in pupils' current work seen during the inspection.
- Senior leaders have made the development of pupils' literacy skills a key focus this year. Pupil premium and Year 7 and Year 8 catch-up funding is effectively used to improve reading and spelling. As a result, pupils make rapid progress and some disadvantaged pupils out-perform their peers. In English, progress is speeding up because pupils are well supported and have frequent opportunities to write extensively. In other subjects, support for pupils' literacy, especially boys' writing, requires more work and the lack of challenge for the most-able pupils is clear.
- New appointments have begun to strengthen pupils' progress in mathematics, but poorly presented work is not systematically challenged and pupils do not yet have enough chances to demonstrate mastery of mathematical concepts and skills. In science, progress is inconsistent across year and ability groups, partly because newly recruited teachers have still to settle into their responsibilities.
- The school is drawing effectively from several sources of support for its improvement, including the Alliance for Learning and other good and outstanding local schools.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The school meets the current minimum standards for 16 to 19 education.
- Attainment is just below the national average. Many students enter the sixth form with standards that are significantly below average. The progress made by students following academic and vocational courses is broadly in line with national expectations and there is little difference between outcomes for different groups of students on the various pathways and subjects offered.
- Retention rates are above those found nationally. The proportion of students who progress to further sustained training or employment is significantly above national averages and all students in the current Year 13 have secured a university place.
- All students who have not gained a GCSE at grade C or above in English and/or mathematics continue to study these subjects and many of them improve their grades.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form is good and based on an honest and accurate evaluation of sixth-form provision. Robust systems track students' progress systematically and any underachievement, poor attendance or behaviour is swiftly tackled.
- Students benefit from strong and impartial careers information, advice and guidance and as a result, all who take up post-16 study achieve their qualifications and progress to the next phase of their education, training or employment.
- Programmes of study are carefully matched to the prior attainment and aspirations of the students and clear, inclusive progression routes are in place. For example, students who have special educational needs may follow a one-year level 2 business studies qualification, leading to an apprenticeship or employment in the following year.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently strong. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give high-quality, individual support to students, so that they enjoy their studies and make good progress from their starting points.
- The 16 to 19 study programme offered by the school is appropriate for students and prepares them well for future education, training or employment. Students benefit from an extensive programme of additional enrichment activities and all learners take part in work experience or other placements.

School details

Unique reference number	105106
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10012154

This inspection 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 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	943
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Les Hudson
Headteacher	Brian Jordan
Telephone number	0151 645 4154
Website	www.bebingtonhigh.com
Email address	schooloffice@bebingtonhigh.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2014–1 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school but numbers are increasing.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Boys significantly outnumber girls.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is over twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above the national average.
- The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection. He will retire from his post at the end of the summer term of 2016 and a new headteacher has been appointed with effect from autumn 2016.
- A very small number of pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4 receive part of their education away from the school site. Providers include Joseph Paxton Hospital School, Everton Free School, Tranmere Community Project and The Vocational College. Pupils are carefully selected and effective systems are in place to check pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance while they are away from the school site.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2015. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works with a range of schools and external agencies, including NHS North West, to promote pupils' physical, emotional and mental health and well-being.
- The school is exploring the possibility of becoming an academy in the next academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of classrooms. It was only possible to arrange one joint observation with a senior leader. Inspectors also spoke with pupils in lessons and looked at their work. A further sample of pupils' written work in different subjects from across the age and ability range of the school was considered.
- Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the school and its grounds. Additionally, inspectors held formal interviews with four groups of pupils from all year groups in the school, to listen to their views about the school. Inspectors also took account of 33 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, as well as 41 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- A wide variety of documentation related to the school's work was also considered by the inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects and of other aspects of the school's work. They also spoke with other members of the school staff. Inspectors also met the chair of the governing body and members of the governing body, and two representatives of the local authority.

Inspection team

Susan Wareing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Ashley	Ofsted Inspector
Adele Mills	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Ruddy	Ofsted Inspector

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