

Mossley Hollins High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106266
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	363705
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	762
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Denton
Headteacher	Mr Drew Duncan
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 27 lessons taught by 26 different teachers. Meetings were held with governors, senior staff and groups of students. Telephone discussions took place with the School Improvement Partner and representatives of two of the school's partnerships for sport and performing arts. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, data showing students' attainment and progress, policies, the minutes of the governing body, reports from the School Improvement Partner, safeguarding records and students' work. Questionnaires were scrutinised from a sample of students, staff and from 183 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which the quality of teaching consistently enables students to make good progress in lessons across all subjects in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Are school leaders' plans for improvement resulting in a better curriculum, especially in Key Stage 4, and a sustained rise in the standards attained by students?
- Are there any differences in the progress made by different groups of students?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized high school serving a wide geographical area.. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is around the national average. A lower than average proportion of students speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and the number who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.

The school has specialist status in the performing arts and sport. It has been granted a number of nationally recognised awards including Investors in People, Artsmark Gold, International School Award and Healthy Schools. A new school building, situated in close proximity to the present site, is scheduled to open in March 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Mossley Hollins is an outstanding high school. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported exceedingly well by leaders at all levels including the governing body, has established a culture of school improvement which is rapidly increasing students' progress and leads to standards which are above average. Responses from parental questionnaires show overwhelming support for the school's leaders. Overall, students make good progress and attain particularly well in their GCSE examinations. All groups of students make equally good progress. The most recent 2010 provisional results show that more than nine out of ten students achieved five or more A* to C grades in GCSE examinations, well above the nationally expected figure. The school's current tracking system reveals that almost every student is on course to achieve this benchmark this year. When English and mathematics are included, the figure is also above that found nationally.

Outstanding capacity to improve is clearly shown by the outcomes of the school's review of the curriculum following the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good. In Key Stage 3, the introduction of interesting themes and topics is supporting improvements to the provision for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. School monitoring records show improved rates of students' progress in English and mathematics in Years 7 to 9. In Key Stage 4, exceptional partnership arrangements contribute very effectively to broaden and personalise curriculum options and choices. The school has successfully increased the vocational study options for students. There are many trips, visitors to school and excellent use is made of the local environment which enriches the curriculum and brings it to life for students. Specialist school provision is outstanding; there are high participation rates in these subjects and the results are outstanding.

Rigorous monitoring has been developed to check on the quality of teaching and learning. A structured timetable of lesson observations is carried out by heads of faculty. Combined with a scrutiny of students' work and an evaluation of the data tracking showing their attainment and progress, this accurately informs the school's leaders and identifies the key priorities needed to improve the progress which students make. Leaders have effectively used the outcomes of monitoring to target staff development and support improvement. The result is an improved profile of teaching and learning which is increasingly leading to good and sometimes outstanding progress for students. Some inconsistencies are present in the marking of students' work in some classes. The use of assessment is also sometimes variable and does not always fully inform the match and challenge of activities provided for all students in the class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more effective use of assessment by:

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- reviewing the school's policy for marking and consistently implementing this in all classes and subjects
- ensuring that all students are effectively guided about what attainment level they are working at and what they need to do next to improve their work
- improving the consistency of high quality lessons providing challenging activities which are well matched to the varying needs of students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Students enter Year 7 with broadly average attainment. Due to good quality teaching and learning and an outstanding curriculum, students make good progress and reach standards which are above average by the end of Year 11. The rate of progress is increasing and attainment is rising as shown by the external examination results in 2010 and by the current data tracking in the school. In lessons seen by inspectors students made good and occasionally outstanding progress. All groups of students achieve well including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Students enjoy learning. Teachers have very high expectations of students' behaviour which is outstanding and there are excellent relationships between staff and students. Students' attendance is outstanding and punctuality has been much improved, in part, due to the new arrangements at the start of the day when lessons begin immediately. Students are keen to do well; they listen attentively, keep on task, cooperate with each other and work studiously. In almost all lessons observed, students responded well to teachers' questions; they were enthusiastic and showed a strong desire to improve their skills and knowledge. Students are very well prepared for later life acquiring good literacy, numeracy and computer skills. They develop increasing self-esteem and confidence through regular involvement in the rich variety of social activities offered to them in school. International links with a number of countries enable students to develop their understanding of other cultures.

Students show an excellent awareness of personal safety and talk knowledgeably about internet safety. They make an outstanding contribution to their school and local community. For example, some students are members of the anti-sexual bullying or anti-cyber bullying groups. Other students are town council representatives or local authority academy leaders. Many students have enjoyed opportunities to complete study projects in the new school building and work experiences have also been provided. Students' engagement groups working with adult and community teams on the new site were national winners for 'Outstanding student engagement in new school design and use.' As a result of these many experiences, students develop outstanding workplace skills.

Students enjoy a wide variety of sporting activities and there are good participation rates for the many extra activities outside of the school curriculum day. The school provides healthy lunches and encourages healthy eating. In the past three years over 30 students have enrolled at the smoking cessation club run at lunchtime. Questionnaire returns from students and parents and carers show that the impact of the school's provision is good. There is a small minority of students who do not fully embrace the school's efforts to ensure they lead a healthy lifestyle.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Most of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good. In some lessons it was outstanding and in a small minority it was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers' excellent subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm made good use of time so that learning moved forward at a quick pace and students of all abilities were challenged. In these lessons teachers use very good questioning skills to develop students' understanding and to extend their learning. Strong features of good or better lessons are teachers' demonstration and explanation of key skills and knowledge to be learned. Teachers use the correct terminology and vocabulary consistently so that students acquire good use of the required language in each subject. Teachers know the students well and respond to their needs in lessons so that they are guided and supported very effectively in their learning. Not all teachers use assessment information well enough to ensure that all students are set suitably demanding tasks and activities, which build on their existing knowledge and understanding. Most teachers mark students work regularly with supportive comments. Teachers' marking does not always make enough reference to students' targets or provide sufficient guidance so that students are clear about how to improve their work.

Students say that the curriculum offers them excellent options so that they are able to choose the best subjects for them to study. There is a good mix of traditional subjects and vocational courses. An extended school day enables students to take three separate

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sciences. A wide range of accredited courses broadens the core GCSE offer to include National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). The school's specialist status is used extremely well, providing students with many opportunities. Almost 50% of students are involved in the musical life of the school. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities in music, sport and performing arts attract participation from around 90% of some year groups. Students' achievements across the curriculum are strongly improving. Most subjects show above average attainment levels and some such as in information and communication technology, drama, physical education and music achieve outstanding results in GCSE examinations.

The impact of the school's outstanding provision for students' care, guidance and support, is seen in the exceptional standards of students' behaviour and levels of social skills. This received almost unanimous support in the questionnaire responses from students, parents and carers. Excellent links are in place with external agencies to ensure effective support especially for the most vulnerable students. Transition arrangements are good with feeder primary schools, and students say they were supported well when they transferred at age 11 years. Similarly, students say that the preparation for post-16 education or work is very good. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and ensure that students feel safe and free from harm.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. In partnership with the senior leaders, this ensures that there is no complacency in the school's drive for improvement. Leaders work extremely effectively as shown by the rigorous monitoring and evaluation carried out by faculty heads. This fully informs the senior leaders and the governing body so that they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to improve. The outcome is a trend of improving student progress and rising standards which are above average. The school's leaders are committed to achieving the very highest standards for students in all aspects of school life. For example, the outstanding governing body has ensured that the new school building has been designed with students' learning needs at the forefront of all design considerations.

Excellent attention is given by leaders to ensure the very best safety and care for students. Procedures for safeguarding are thorough and robust ensuring full compliance with all government requirements. Students are confident that school is a safe and supportive environment in which to learn. All staff, supported by senior leaders, are

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effective in promoting equal opportunities for students. The school has successfully targeted any previously underachieving groups so that all students make good progress in their learning. The contribution made by the school to community cohesion is outstanding through the wide ranging involvement of many students. This includes charity work, citizenship initiatives and through the specialist school subjects which offer excellent opportunities for public performance. Several international links extend students' experiences.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned the questionnaires were extremely happy with the school. They are almost unanimous in viewing every aspect of the school as positive. They agree that the school is very well led and managed, students are making enough progress, teaching is good and the school keeps students safe. There were individual comments about some areas such as teachers' marking and inspectors judge that there is some variability and this appears in this report. There were no trends in the extremely small numbers of negative comments. Each criticism, which was offered constructively, was discussed confidentially and anonymously with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mossley Hollins High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 183 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 762 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	49	87	48	5	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	96	52	84	46	2	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	98	54	79	43	3	2	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	99	54	76	42	5	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	102	56	75	41	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	40	97	53	9	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	28	115	63	12	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	88	48	83	45	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	93	51	81	44	5	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	103	56	72	39	3	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	40	95	52	8	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	116	63	63	34	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	117	64	58	32	2	1	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Mossley Hollins High School, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL5 9DJ

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We agree with what you and your parents told us, Mossley Hollins is an excellent school. These are the main reasons why we judged the school to be so outstanding:

- You achieve good progress in your studies and reach above average standards, especially in your GCSE results.
- We found that the curriculum you receive provides you with excellent choices and is very well suited to your future needs.
- The headteacher and all school leaders are outstanding in their efforts to improve your school.
- You behave exceptionally well, attendance is excellent and you work very hard.
- All the staff in school take care of you very well.
- You receive good lessons which are improving because the staff are always looking for ways to get better.

Even outstanding schools can improve. We have asked that better use is made of the assessment information about your attainment. In particular, we have said that teachers should use this data better so that the tasks you are given in lessons are always suitably challenging for you to learn. Also, we have asked that all your work is marked on time and helps you to improve.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future and hope you enjoy your new school building.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Coleman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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