

Matthew Moss High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105839
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	355853
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Patrick Geraghty 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	894
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Rowe
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Raymer
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2007
School address	Matthew Moss Lane Rochdale Lancashire OL11 3LU
Telephone number	01706 632910
Fax number	01706 523857
Email address	araymer@mmhs.rochdale.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time visiting 37 lessons. They held meetings with staff, groups of students, the School Improvement Partner and vice- chair of the governors. Documentation was scrutinised including: information related to the tracking of the academic and personal progress of students; detailed analysis of students' attainment and progress; school self-evaluation; minutes from meetings of the governors; and evidence to demonstrate how the school supports students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Inspectors also examined evaluations undertaken by the school to ensure that it meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. In addition, 93 parental questionnaires were scrutinised along with questionnaires returned by a representative sample of staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Students' attainment and progress to determine the effectiveness of strategies used to improve outcomes.
- If teaching and learning are sufficiently challenging to promote better outcomes for students.
- The impact of curriculum development on increasing engagement and improving students' outcomes.
- The effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels to drive improvement.

Information about the school

Matthew Moss High School is an average sized secondary school situated in Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and increasing. Some 41% of students are of minority ethnic background. The school has specialist science college status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where a vibrant learning culture is focused sharply on the development of independent learning skills and the development of a strong aspirational culture. Students, especially at Key Stage 3, respond with enthusiasm and delight to this emphasis. This was aptly summarised by the comment of one student: 'You really enjoy learning here; I can't wait to get to school to start. You learn to think for yourself and with others.' Students generally make good progress by the end of Key Stage 4 across a broad range of subjects from below average levels of attainment on entry. Over a four year period there has been a steady improvement in attainment in GCSE examinations. Evidence from inspection indicates that the decline in five A*-C GCSE, including English and mathematics in 2010 has been reversed. The school recognises the need for more rapid improvement in this indicator, as well as in the attainment and progress of White British boys who currently do not do as well as their peers.

Students are well behaved, highly engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. Relationships across the school are excellent. There is much good teaching. In the majority of lessons challenge and independent learning are promoted with enthusiasm and students respond well. In a minority of lessons work set does not meet the needs of all students. Some marking fails to indicate to students what they need to do to improve for examinations at Key Stage 4. Curriculum developments over recent years have contributed to improved attainment. There is good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote learning. Progression to further education or work-based learning is high. Good care, support and guidance enable students to succeed. Students have high levels of confidence in the school's ability to advise them effectively.

Leadership and management show a strong commitment to the well-being of all students. They have embedded ambition through an emphasis on developing individual and group learning skills. Staff, at all levels, fully support the school's focus on learning. Examination results have improved for the majority of students. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 are very good. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate. However, some aspects of whole-school monitoring and evaluation and planning for improvement lack the necessary sharpness to enable more rapid and sustained progress at Key Stage 4. Middle managers are currently not as accountable for standards nor involved enough in whole-school planning for improvement as they could be. Governors are highly supportive of the school, although they sometimes do not sufficiently challenge senior management. The school provides good value for money. Given the trend of improvement over four years, the embedding of a strong aspirational culture and the good quality of teaching and learning, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise attainment at Key Stage 4 so that outcomes for five GCSE at A* to C, including English and mathematics, exceed the national average by 2012 through:
 - improving further the attainment of White British boys
 - ensuring that the more-able students achieve a higher grade profile across all subjects
 - focused marking and assessment for learning that enhances the development of examination skills at Key Stage 4.
- Improve provision through the development of more rigorous and effective whole-school monitoring and evaluation systems by developing:
 - more effective whole-school tracking and monitoring of students' progress to better inform intervention strategies
 - systems for the evaluation of teaching and learning to more effectively identify areas for improvement and of good or outstanding practice
 - the accountability and involvement of middle managers in improvement planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school places great emphasis on imaginative and challenging approaches to learning. Students work with much enthusiasm, commitment and vitality and make strong progress in developing their abilities in learning. This was exemplified in an outstanding and invigorating English lesson where students took responsibility for the organisation of their learning, and when some did not meet the objectives they quickly refocused. All students then eagerly moved on making excellent progress both individually and in their learning teams. Students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Students' attainment is average and their achievement is good overall. From 2007 to 2010, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades rose sharply. The proportion of students attaining this measure with English and mathematics included increased in 2009 to 52% but declined to below the national average in 2010. Evidence from the school tracking records and the current standards of work indicate that students are on track for a higher performance in examinations in 2011. While there has been an improvement in the progress made overall, White British boys continue to underperform. More-able students do not always succeed as well as they could through the attainment of higher grades.

Students enjoy school, feel safe and treat each other and adults with mutual respect and dignity. Behaviour is good and there are few incidents of bullying. Students have a good understanding of safety issues relating to their own health and well-being, because these aspects are well covered through the curriculum and the pastoral system. Students increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles and take advantage of a broad range of sports provision. Figures indicate that the number leaving school that are not in education, training or employment is well below the local area average. Attendance has improved greatly and is now in line with the national average. Students have a good awareness of faiths and cultures other than their own and demonstrate tolerance, respect and compassion. Productive links have been established with schools in Southern Africa.

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

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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teaching is good with a significant majority of lessons seen by inspectors graded good or better. The best lessons are well planned and develop good communication skills. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and engage students with interesting, imaginative and developmental activities. Teachers use praise and questioning to encourage students' ideas and frequently reshape explanations to maximise learning opportunities. In these lessons, students are challenged and engaged so they sustain their motivation and application. Technology is generally well used to support learning. In satisfactory lessons, outcomes are not clear and too often these lessons are teacher led and lack pace, excitement and new learning. In these lessons teaching or support assistants do not always contribute effectively to enhancing learning opportunities. The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory. In lessons which are good, teacher planning is well linked to prior learning and meets the needs of all groups of students. However, in other lessons limitations of planning and slower pace prevent students from making good progress. The use of marking to promote the improvement of examination skills is insufficiently developed in Years 10 and 11.

Overall the curriculum is broad and balanced. The school has been innovative in introducing a fresh approach to learning in the Year 7 and Year 8 curriculum, exemplified in the 'My World' programme. The Key Stage 3 curriculum excites and encourages

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students to take responsibility for their learning and impacts significantly on their ability to develop independent learning skills as well as to develop a passion for learning. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has improved since the last inspection and there is now a better balance between academic and vocational courses. The specialism in science has impacted on other subject areas through sharing approaches to teaching and learning and whole-school theme days and initiatives. The application of ICT in the curriculum is good and developing. However, the school has yet to establish fully a curriculum more suited to the needs of distinctive groups at Key Stage 4, such as those disaffected from traditional learning. Enrichment opportunities are varied, well supported by staff and greatly enjoyed by students. An increasing number of students progress to further education.

Care, guidance and support are good. Transition from primary school is well organised and effective so that when students join the school in Year 7 they feel that the support they receive is good. The effective pastoral system is organised within family groups each comprising students from each year. This structure has greatly enhanced the development of positive relationships and support structures between year groups and is highly valued by students. Registration time is used well to motivate, raise confidence and aspirations for the day ahead. Good links with external agencies promote and support students' welfare, learning and progress. Targeted support for vulnerable students has resulted in improvements in their attendance, behaviour, confidence and relationships. Information, advice and guidance provided in Year 9 and Year 11 are valued by students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have established clear strategic objectives, which are understood and supported by staff. Central to these objectives is a strong emphasis on the development, for students, of independent learning skills. This has strongly impacted on positive student attitudes and, along with changes to the curriculum, has enabled a trend of improved attainment over the last four years. Some aspects of whole-school monitoring and evaluation and planning for improvement lack the necessary sharpness to enable the more rapid and sustained progress that the school aspires to for all students. The management of teaching and learning is effective in supporting a high percentage of good or better teaching. However, systems for evaluating the internal monitoring of teaching and learning are not fully developed so as to allow for the best practice to be captured and shared for the benefit of all students.

Governors are committed to the school and play a key role in shaping its direction. However, they are not sufficiently critical and evaluative in monitoring the school's

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performance. Links with external providers, businesses and agencies add to the students' learning and the good quality of care, support and guidance. There are missed opportunities to further develop partnerships with other local schools at Key Stage 4 and through the science specialism. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity through support programmes, the curriculum and an increasing range of additional activities. The school has established good links with the local community and developed beneficial international links. Safeguarding is good: procedures meet requirements and are regularly reviewed; systems are robust. The management of resources is good and the school's value for money, set against outcomes, is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

An analysis of responses to the questionnaire indicates that the majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at school and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that their child is well prepared for the future. However, a small minority expressed concerns about the inadequate help given to them to support their child's learning and on behaviour. The school acknowledges in its self-evaluation that links with parents need to be improved further. Inspectors found student behaviour around the school and in class to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Matthew Moss 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 894 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	40	51	55	2	2	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	37	40	50	54	5	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	41	45	48	6	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	31	54	58	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	43	48	52	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	34	47	51	10	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	34	50	54	8	9	0	0
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)	33	35	53	57	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	33	51	55	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	32	49	53	9	10	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	26	59	63	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	37	53	57	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	51	39	42	3	3	3	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



8 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Matthew Moss High School, Rochdale, OL11 3LU

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school this week. We would also like to commend you for your good behaviour, maturity and your commitment to making the school a pleasant place to work in. We were impressed by how much you all enjoy learning and the positive relationships you have developed with each other and with adults. We would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with us.

Our inspection found that yours is a good school. You are making good progress throughout your time at the school. Your GCSE results are improving. There is much good teaching in the school. In these lessons, you respond well to the teachers' high expectations. Your curriculum options are good. The teachers and support staff give you good care, guidance and support.

The leaders in your school worked with us to decide on some ways in which your provision could be better. We decided that to achieve this, the school should:

- improve your results in GCSE examinations, particularly in English and mathematics, so that they match and exceed national averages
- improve the way in which the senior leaders track and monitor your progress and provide additional support so that you all can make good and better progress.

You can help your school to improve further by ensuring everyone focuses on the pursuit of excellence for all of you and trying hard in your studies so that you can achieve your full potential in life. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Patrick Geraghty

Her Majesty's Inspector

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