

Morecambe Community High School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119761 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 358621 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 December 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Paul Chambers HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1498 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 294 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Judith Catt |
| Headteacher | Mr J McNaughton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 December 2007 |
| School address | Dallam Avenue Morecambe Lancashire LA4 5BG |
| Telephone number | 01524 410207 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 49 lessons, taught by 48 different teachers, and held meetings with groups of students, staff and a member of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents and records, including those relating to the safeguarding of students, and 366 parental questionnaires.

- The strength of learning and progress, including in the sixth form.
- The impact of managers at all levels on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The areas in which the school has improved outcomes most effectively and securely.

Information about the school

Morecambe Community High School is a large school, serving socially-mixed communities in Morecambe and the surrounding areas. It is a non-selective school in an area where some schools select students by ability. A slightly greater proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals than in most schools. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. Over 95% of students are of White British origin. The school holds specialist status in mathematics and computing and holds a number of awards, including Healthy School, the Diana Memorial Award and Sportsmark.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Morecambe Community High School is a satisfactory school. Improvements since the last inspection are evident in a range of areas of the school's work and in outcomes for students. Satisfactory and improving teaching is supported by an effective curriculum and good care, guidance and support; as a result students have a positive view of the school and demonstrate many good personal qualities. Attendance is low but improving, and is clearly higher than at the time of the last inspection.

Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly in line with expectations. Results in GCSE examinations are close to national averages: for example, in 2010 the proportion of students who gained five or more passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was 53%, compared with a national average of 54%. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and during their time in school, including in the sixth form; comparisons with national data suggest that students make progress in line with that made by similar students in other schools. Leaders and managers have identified and addressed successfully recent uneven achievement across subjects, and accept that improvements in some subject areas needs to be consolidated.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan effectively, develop good working relationships with students and manage behaviour positively. The use of questioning varies: in the best lessons, teachers challenge students' understanding, in the less successful lessons, questions do not focus sufficiently on developing understanding or giving students opportunities to reflect on their learning. In other lessons where learning is satisfactory rather than good, teachers do not take sufficient account of the different abilities within the class or they miss opportunities to develop students' independent learning skills. Several examples of good assessment were seen during the inspection. For example, many teachers provide well-focused written feedback or use peer assessment so that students gain a good understanding of how they can improve.

The school demonstrates good capacity to improve. Consistent improvements in several measures of examination success are supported by improvements in other outcomes. For example, at the time of the last inspection, behaviour was judged to be satisfactory. A range of evidence, including parents' and carers' and students' views, observations during the inspection and a dramatic drop in exclusions, confirms that behaviour is now good. Improvements in provision include broadening the curriculum in both the main school and the sixth form so that it meets the needs of all students better. A sophisticated and accurate analysis of attendance data, supported by concerted action, is beginning to have an impact on raising levels of attendance further. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate but sometimes focuses too much on improvements within the school rather than comparisons with national data.

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The school's specialist status contributes positively to students' achievements. For example, Key Stage 4 examination results in information and communication technology (ICT) are among the highest in the school. In the sixth form, mathematics and ICT courses attract growing numbers of students and are among the most popular options. The school fosters links with local primary schools through visits of staff from the specialist subjects to teach lessons and through providing help and advice where needed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress, including in the sixth form, through:
 - ensuring that attendance improves further
 - consolidating recent progress in making achievement more consistent across the school.
- Improve teaching further through:
 - ensuring that teaching caters fully for all abilities in the group
 - making more use of questioning that probes understanding and reviews learning
 - equipping students to be independent learners.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Inspection evidence confirms that improvements in teaching are beginning to increase students' rate of progress in lessons. All groups of students make satisfactory progress, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who benefit from the effective support provided by teaching assistants and other adults. School monitoring records show that recent improvements in GCSE results can be maintained and built upon further. Students enjoy school and settle to work in lessons quickly; their good behaviour makes a significant contribution to the positive ethos evident in many classrooms and around the school.

Students feel safe and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and take part enthusiastically in the many sporting activities on offer. This is reflected in several awards held by the school. Particularly effective is the outdoor education provision, which involves all students and is a strong and distinctive feature of the curriculum. Students take full advantage of the many opportunities for them to contribute to the school community: for example, many students in Years 10 and 11 support a range of sporting activities for younger students. Students develop satisfactory levels of workplace skills and are able to use their basic skills, including ICT, effectively in a variety of contexts. Recent attendance figures are higher than at the same time last year and provide secure evidence that attendance is rising.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |
| 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?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, rather than good as judged by the school. Currently, the proportion of good or better lessons is not sufficiently high to lead securely to good progress for students. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of all students, who are challenged consistently to produce their best work. These lessons proceed with noticeable pace and time is used productively throughout; assessment information is used frequently to ensure activities are pitched appropriately and misconceptions and errors are put right rapidly. In some less effective lessons, teachers talk for too long, restricting the opportunities for students to develop independent-learning skills, or the planned activities do not fully meet the needs of all abilities in the class.

The curriculum is good and has improved since the time of the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, the broad range of courses available meets the needs of students with different interests and aptitudes well. The introduction of a core ICT qualification has been highly successful and students completing this course achieve well. Students enjoy the wide range of varied enrichment activities on offer in the main school and in the sixth form.

Strong care, guidance and support contribute well to developing students' positive attitudes, relationships and behaviour. Managers use monitoring information effectively to identify those students in need of greater support: they target resources and work effectively in partnership with outside agencies. The arrangements to support transition at

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all stages are good and students speak highly of the guidance they receive to make choices about their future options and careers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| 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?

Leaders and managers are focused fully on achieving improved outcomes for students. Since the last inspection, staff morale has risen and the turnover of teaching staff has reduced considerably. Senior leaders apply robust systems for ensuring that middle leaders monitor and evaluate the work of their teams effectively. As a result of targeted training and decisive action from senior leaders, middle leaders now make a good contribution to improving teaching and learning. Improvement planning has appropriate areas of focus but success criteria are not always sharp enough to ensure that managers can evaluate clearly the impact of actions taken.

Members of the governing body are highly supportive of the school and are beginning to provide an appropriate degree of challenge. They meet their statutory responsibilities effectively and are rigorous in ensuring that staff and students are kept safe. This reflects good safeguarding procedures and policies. School staff engage well with parents and carers, who appreciate the frequency with which teachers keep them informed about their children's progress.

The school acts effectively to ensure that all members of the school community are valued equally. Staff monitor the progress of different groups of students and support them with great care and professionalism; this helps to ensure that all groups, including the most vulnerable, make similar progress. The school promotes community cohesion effectively at a local level but links with organisations nationally and internationally are less well developed.

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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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Sixth form

Students' achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. Attainment in A level and AS level examinations is below average, but is above average in some vocationally-focused courses, such as applied business studies. The school encourages students of all abilities to consider continuing into the sixth form and guides them on to appropriate courses. As a result, the prior attainment of students starting their courses is below that found in most sixth forms. Overall, students make satisfactory progress relative to their prior attainment at GCSE. Students show good personal qualities: they behave well, relate well to adults, and make constructive contributions to the school.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Several examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection. In these lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and well-planned activities help students to learn at a good rate. Learning is satisfactory rather than good where, for example, teachers focus on skills and techniques and miss opportunities to develop students' broader understanding of the subject. The satisfactory curriculum meets the needs of the students. Provision has broadened in recent years to offer a greater range of options, including several at GCSE-equivalent level and several that feature the school's specialist subjects. Students appreciate the time and support that teachers give, and feel well advised about moving into employment or the next stage of learning. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form and have clear and well-focused plans to bring about improvement. They take full account of students' views and intervene to address areas of weakness in provision and outcomes. There is, however, no clear evidence that management actions have led to improved outcomes overall.

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

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 3 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Nearly a quarter of parents and carers contributed their views via the inspection questionnaire. Responses to all questions were very positive; for almost all questions, over 90% agreed with the positive statements about the school. The views given in the questionnaire were particularly useful to the inspection team in making the judgement about behaviour and in confirming that the school engages well with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Morecambe Community 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 366 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1498 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 117 | 32 | 217 | 59 | 25 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 123 | 34 | 228 | 62 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 164 | 45 | 190 | 52 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 137 | 37 | 201 | 55 | 18 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 129 | 35 | 219 | 60 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 96 | 26 | 232 | 63 | 26 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 82 | 22 | 250 | 68 | 22 | 6 | 2 | 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) | 110 | 30 | 224 | 61 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 111 | 30 | 232 | 63 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 112 | 31 | 204 | 56 | 28 | 8 | 9 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 90 | 25 | 230 | 63 | 17 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 137 | 37 | 199 | 54 | 16 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 170 | 46 | 181 | 49 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 |

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

| | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school | 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.



10 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Morecambe Community High School, Morecambe, LA4 5BG

You will recall that recently a team of inspectors and I inspected your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and a particular thank you to those of you who spoke with members of the inspection team. This letter is to tell you about what we found.

We judged Morecambe Community High School to be a satisfactory school. Satisfactory and improving teaching is supported by an effective curriculum and good care, guidance and support; as a result you have a positive view of the school and demonstrate many good personal qualities. For example, you behave well, both in lessons and around the school. You told us that you feel safe in school and that bullying is rare, and we were impressed that many of you take up opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle through participating in sporting activities and eating healthily.

Leaders and managers deserve considerable credit for recent improvements across the school. For example, results at GCSE have improved, and you benefit from a greater number and more relevant options for study at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school has improved in many ways and we have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to focus on the following to improve the school further.

- Raise attainment and improve progress, including in the sixth form, through ensuring that more of you attend regularly and that you achieve equally well in all your subjects.
- Improve teaching further through catering fully for all abilities in the group, making more effective use of questioning and equipping you to learn independently.

You can play your part in making Morecambe Community High School a better school. Keep attending regularly and encourage others to do the same, work hard in all your lessons, and make the most of opportunities to learn even when teachers are not giving you direct instructions. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Chambers

Her Majesty's Inspector

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