

Philips High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105360
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	355766
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Joan Davis 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 Alan Walton
Headteacher	Mr Chris Trees
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in 33 lessons and the same number of teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and members of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, the School Improvement Partner's reports, the school's development plan, minutes of meetings, policies and students' work. The team also considered an analysis of 215 parents' and carers' questionnaires as well as those from staff and students.

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

- The effectiveness of the school's actions to reverse the decline in attainment in 2010.
- How effective changes in the curriculum have been in securing good outcomes for all students.
- Whether previous poor performance in science is being effectively tackled.

Information about the school

Philips High School is a slightly smaller than average secondary school. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. There is a higher than average proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is a designated centre for physically disabled students. Philips High School has specialist status for mathematics and computing. The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, the International Award and the National Sportsmark Award.

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

3

Main findings

Philips High is a satisfactory school. Satisfactory progress has been made in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. The attainment of students has been above average but performance dipped in 2010. Current attainment of students in Year 11 is broadly average and learning and progress are satisfactory across the school. Therefore, their achievement is satisfactory overall.

The school has several good features. Its chief strengths lie in the care, guidance and support provided to students, provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the contribution the school makes to community cohesion. The school has a clear vision for its role in the local community in securing mutual understanding and respect for diversity. The specialist subjects have driven improvements across the curriculum. Information and communication technology is used highly effectively to support learning, and mathematics teachers have led a local initiative to improve numeracy and hence employment prospects for some members of the local community. Students feel safe in the school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good overall and movement around the school is orderly. Students are friendly, cooperative and polite. They say that there is very little bullying and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The school was at the time of the inspection preparing students in Years 10 and 11 for their forthcoming examinations. Teaching is sometimes good and, on occasion, outstanding but opportunities are missed to share existing good practice and thereby improve the quality of provision overall. As a result, in many lessons too much talk from the teacher leads to a lack of engagement on the part of students.

The use of assessment to support learning is developing into a strength of the school but remains inconsistent. In some areas of the curriculum, such as English, assessment is used highly effectively to support learning. However, this good practice is not sufficiently shared with other departments and therefore assessment is of variable quality and opportunities are missed to give students information on how to improve their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school works effectively in partnership with a wide range of institutions, such as the local college of further education, in order to broaden the range of courses on offer. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently tailored to the needs of individual students.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Good practice at all levels exists and the headteacher is well-respected by members of the school community. However, there is not a concerted approach to planning for improvement and monitoring the quality of teaching and the impact of initiatives on outcomes for students. As a result,

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there remains too much variability of practice. Action has been taken to tackle underperformance, for example in science, where outcomes for students are beginning to improve. Given the satisfactory level of self-evaluation and the strengths in provision in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The school's procedures for financial management are sound. The school provides adequate value for money because outcomes for students are satisfactory.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and thereby raise attainment by:
 - ensuring that existing good practice is shared across the school and adopting a consistently good approach to lesson planning and delivery
 - ensuring that all lessons meet the needs and abilities of all learners
 - establishing a whole-school marking policy and ensuring that all students receive clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - adopting a concerted approach to development planning that is clearly focused on whole-school improvement
 - developing a more rigorous and consistent approach to monitoring the work of departments and individual teachers
 - developing the Key Stage 4 curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all abilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enter the school with prior attainment that is broadly in line with the national average. They make satisfactory progress overall so their achievement is satisfactory. Attainment was above average in 2008 and 2009 but it dipped in some key measures in 2010. Data provided by the school suggest that the current attainment of students in Year 11 is broadly average. Performance in science has been poor but the school has taken action to tackle this area of weakness and outcomes for students are improving as a result. The learning and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Intervention and support are used highly effectively to secure good outcomes for these students and the leadership of this area is a strength of the school. Attainment and learning and progress in English and mathematics are good. The school benefits from excellent and dynamic leadership of these subjects and there is a clear drive and ambition to secure good outcomes for students. Attainment and learning and progress in other areas of the curriculum are satisfactory overall. Progress in lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory.

Students feel safe in the school. They trust staff and feel that they can confide in them should problems arise. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and the number of exclusions is decreasing. They have a good appreciation of the importance of

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adopting healthy lifestyles and there is a higher than average take-up of school meals. Opportunities to participate in extra-curricular sport are appreciated by students. Effective contribution to the life of the school is shown through the take up of positions of responsibility with older students enjoy acting as mentors for younger students. Students lead assemblies, participate in dramatic productions and concerts attended by the local community and are involved in a community art project with parents and carers. Workplace skills are developed through participation in a range of activities, such as the enterprise challenge event held in a local shopping centre. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and students are punctual to lessons for the most part.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have opportunities to participate in a wide range of cultural activities including trips abroad. The school is highly inclusive and ensures that all students have the chance to take part in the activities on offer. Art work displayed around the school is of a high quality and reinforces students' spiritual development, for example by exploring the theme of conflict and giving students opportunities to reflect on such concepts.

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	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?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively in order to support students' learning. There are substantial variations in the quality of teaching both within and across subjects. In the

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better lessons, imaginative learning activities are well-matched to students' abilities and interests, enabling students to learn by applying their knowledge in context and reflecting on their learning. These lessons are characterised by high expectations and a brisk pace. For example, in an outstanding Year 7 English lesson, students were challenged and engaged by the enthusiasm of the teacher. Students were encouraged to express themselves and as a result, made outstanding progress. In weaker lessons, activities are not sufficiently matched to the abilities and interests of the learners. Lessons lack pace and challenge and, as a result, students lose interest, become passive and lack engagement.

The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory and developing well. Systems for tracking the performance of students and putting in place intervention and support when students are not performing as well as they might are highly developed and used effectively in some areas of the curriculum, for example in English. However, this good practice is not applied consistently across all subjects. Marking is of variable quality as there is no whole-school policy to address this issue.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a wide range of traditional, academic subjects on offer and the school has made some attempt to expand its provision of vocational courses. However, the curriculum is managed and monitored principally by departments and not by the school's leadership team. Therefore, the quality of curriculum development is variable. There has been limited progress in designing a curriculum that meets the abilities and interests of all students. As a result, some students are following courses that do not meet their needs.

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support is good. Good links have been established with local primary schools to ease transition, and the nurture group in Year 7 provides support for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school works highly effectively with a number of agencies to meet the individual needs of students. Students speak highly of the care, guidance and support they receive, saying, 'Teachers are not just teachers; they are like our second parents.'

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There are strengths at all levels of leadership and evident support for the headteacher's vision for the school. However, the lack of a consistent approach to school improvement, driven by senior leaders, is limiting the school's further development. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate but planning for improvement lacks prioritisation and clarity. The monitoring of the work of departments and individual teachers lacks rigour and

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consistency. There are missed opportunities within the leadership and management of teaching and learning to provide specific focus. Similarly, there are insufficient opportunities to share the sometimes outstanding practice that exists within the school, so that all teaching can become as good as the best.

Governors are supportive, capable and hold the school to account. They have a satisfactory grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses but do not always have access to information that would enable them to identify areas for improvement. Nevertheless, they are increasingly involved in effectively challenging underperformance. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is good. They appreciate the efforts of the headteacher and his staff to support their children. The school has built effective partnerships with a range of institutions which enrich the lives of students. The school has policies in place to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination but the participation in the wider life of the school of different groups of students is not as yet sufficiently monitored. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The school is a highly cohesive community where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated. The school has links with other schools as far afield as Ghana, China and Japan and has gained the International Award for its work in this respect. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory, but could be stronger in some aspects. The school is now addressing some minor issues raised during the inspection regarding safeguarding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

There was an average return to the Ofsted questionnaire. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and most say that their children enjoy school and it meets their children's needs. The overwhelming majority feel that the school informs them well of

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their children's progress while a very large majority feel that their children are making enough progress and prepares them well for their future.

A very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good overall during the inspection and that the school has appropriate systems in place to manage poor behaviour should it occur. A few parents and carers raised concerns regarding bullying, but when students spoken said that bullying is rare and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively.

A very large majority feel that the school is led and managed effectively and the overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experience at Philips High School.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Philips 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 215 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	45	21	153	71	15	7	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	25	148	69	11	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	74	34	134	62	5	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	77	36	125	58	12	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	30	138	64	8	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	23	137	64	25	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	13	144	67	42	20	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)	57	27	141	66	13	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	21	152	71	16	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	28	120	56	23	11	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	17	135	63	30	14	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	29	131	61	15	7	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	33	130	60	10	5	0	0

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



20 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Philips High School, Manchester, M45 7PH

Thank you very much for the warm welcome we received during our inspection of your school. We were impressed by your friendliness and the good attitudes you show towards one another. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Many of you enjoy taking part in activities such as trips abroad and the excellent range of sporting opportunities on offer. You have good links with schools in other parts of the world and you show respect for other cultures. Your attainment by the end of Year 11 is average overall, although in English and mathematics, it is above average. You make satisfactory progress as you move up through the school.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. We noticed that you enjoy lessons that are imaginative and challenging. Your behaviour is good and you are very polite. The school cares well for you and you trust your teachers. You know you can talk to them if you have a problem.

We identified a number of areas where we think the school should make improvements. We have asked the headteacher to make sure good teachers share their ideas with other teachers so that all lessons are as good as the best. We think that this will help you to improve your results in examinations, as well as making lessons more interesting. We have also asked the headteacher to make his plans for your school clearer so that everybody in school knows how best to contribute to its improvement. Finally, we asked the school to introduce a wider range of courses that better suit your abilities and interests.

All of you can help in the improvement of your school by attending school regularly, working hard and taking advantage of the many opportunities available to you.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Davis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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