

Westleigh High School - A College of Technology

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 106524 |
| Local Authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 367377 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 May 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | John Barnes |

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 | 768 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr John Holland |
| Headteacher | Mr John Banks |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 October 2007 |
| School address | Westleigh Lane Leigh Lancashire WN7 5NL |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 36 lessons and saw 35 teachers. They held meetings with members of staff, members of the senior leadership team, groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and safeguarding information, improvement planning and the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, questionnaires returned by staff and students, along with 101 from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- How well students' levels of attainment are improving in English, mathematics and science.
- How far the school has improved achievement across subjects and for different groups.
- Whether teaching and learning are sufficiently challenging to support better outcomes for students.
- How well leadership and management at all levels have an impact on achievement, teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Westleigh High School is a mixed comprehensive school of smaller-than-average size, serving mainly the former mining communities of Hindley Green, Leigh Central and Leigh West. Parental preferences for admission have increased for the third consecutive year. Almost all students are from a White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well-above-average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The school is a specialist technology college and has Healthy School status. It holds a number of awards including Sportsmark and gold awards for Investors in People and Artsmark.

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

The quality of education at Westleigh High School is satisfactory and there are clear indications that it is improving and can continue to improve. The school has many good and a few outstanding features. Excellent care, guidance and support are the school's foundation stones. They ensure that students feel very safe in school and that their personal development is strong. Although attainment is low overall at the end of Key Stage 4 it is improving rapidly, and learning and progress, although satisfactory, are improving securely and quickly. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that their child is making enough progress at this school.

Students are proud of their school. They thrive personally and socially and have a high awareness of how to stay safe and be healthy. The school offers a very wide range of opportunities for students to participate in activities that go beyond routine classroom experiences. As a result the school's ethos and outcomes in most areas of personal well-being are good. Parents agree that the school meets the needs of students. A comment from one of them epitomises the views of many, 'I feel that the school brings out the best in all children. They seem to find out what each individual child excels at, whether it is academic, sport or drama, and they give every child the opportunity to do it.'

The curriculum is a strength of the school. It has developed strongly to match students' needs and aspirations and there is an extensive range of vocational options for students. Highly productive links have been made with a number of appreciative partners. While much teaching is good, too many lessons are satisfactory, where there is not yet sufficient focus on speeding up the rate at which students make progress in their learning. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and teaching is improving but there are still too many lessons in which tasks are not challenging enough. Marking students' work to guide future progress is not consistently applied across classrooms.

Westleigh is well led by a highly effective and dedicated headteacher and is well placed to improve further. Strong leadership that encourages an ethos of cooperation has focussed the school's activities successfully on raising achievement and improving outcomes for students. This ethos ensures that staff are totally committed to what the school is trying to achieve and are proud to be members of it. It is resulting in quickly accelerating progress and rising attainment. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, and the priorities it needs to focus on to drive improvement further. The evident strengths across all areas of leadership and management, such as the development of partnerships, the contribution to community cohesion, safeguarding and equal opportunities, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

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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?

- Raise attainment and further accelerate progress, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching across the school
 - - making better use of data on students' progress to ensure lessons are targeted carefully at the needs of different groups of students
 - - making sure that marking is consistent across all faculties to ensure that students know how to improve their work

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement is satisfactory and improving strongly, with students making at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress from their broadly average starting points. After a period of slow improvement, attainment is now rising sharply because leadership has taken decisive action to bring about improvement: tracking of students' progress is rigorous and accurate; early GCSE entry in key subjects has been introduced; the Assertive Mentoring programme is having a positive impact on students' performance; and a range of intervention strategies are supporting learning. These measures are starting to make a difference. Consequently, attainment is now rising significantly. The results from the early entry examination results in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 4 are clear evidence of the strong improvement taking place. In 2010 the school met its specialist subject attainment targets.

The significant improvement in the attainment of current Year 11 and 10 students indicates good progress and is evidence of strategies to improve literacy across the school. In lessons observed during the inspection, the progress students made in their learning was correlated closely with the quality of teaching and assessment. In lessons where progress was good, teachers' expectations were higher and there was a greater level of challenge. In the majority of lessons students show strong levels of responsibility and awareness of what they need to do to continue improving their work. They behave extremely well and cooperate with each other and adults to achieve their best. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers. Some students whose circumstances make them vulnerable make extremely good progress.

Students' behaviour in lessons is good and around school it is exemplary. They are polite and respond well to direction from adults. Attendance is above average and the proportion of students who are persistently absent has been reduced to below average. The great majority of students leave school with five GCSE qualifications which contribute to their preparation for future life. However, some students are not as well prepared for the next stage of their lives as they should be because of their limited literacy skills. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, supported by the specialism, and good coverage of health issues in the curriculum.

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There are also many opportunities to contribute to school life and to take on responsibility; students take up these opportunities with great enthusiasm. Students are active fund-raisers and have done much to raise the profile of the school in the community. Opportunities in religious studies and citizenship lessons to relate personal values to ethical issues contribute significantly to students' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but, whilst students are aware of multicultural issues, this area is not as strong as other elements.

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 | 4 |
| 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 | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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?

Much teaching is good or better, none is inadequate. Overall, however, teaching is judged satisfactory because in too many lessons there are still inconsistencies in how effectively it supports students' learning and progress. Good teaching is characterised by good pace, appropriate challenge and a good variety of stimulating activities to keep students motivated and on task. Where teaching is less effective students spend too long listening, which acts as a brake on learning. Pace is sometimes too slow and not all teachers use assessment information to focus work for different groups. Consequently, some students make no better than satisfactory progress. Teachers mark students' work regularly. However, the quality of marking and written feedback is variable across the school and students are not consistently given clear information about what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.

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The school's curriculum has been successfully adapted and has evolved to better fit students' interests and needs. Those students entering the school with low levels of literacy receive additional support and intervention to make the curriculum more accessible and to improve attainment in English and mathematics. Excellent partnership arrangements enhance a wide range of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4 which suit the needs and aspirations of all students. Students and their parents and carers are appreciative of the wide range of after-school clubs and activities. The specialist status in technology underpins a range of enjoyable opportunities including Technology and Enterprise Days in which all students are involved.

Outstanding care, guidance and support for students are at the heart of the school's ethos. Every effort is taken to enable them to make the most of their time in school. A key strength is the effectiveness of intervention for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Those with additional needs receive strong support and guidance from a range of staff, including the school-based police officer, counsellors and the school nurse. Transition arrangements with primary schools are very effective. The impact of the school's supportive and nurturing approach is evident in the strong outcomes for students' personal development.

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 | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong teamwork across the school in pursuit of improvement is proof that the vision for improvement has been firmly embedded by senior leaders. They and all the staff work exceptionally hard to overcome barriers to learning and to raise the aspirations of students and their parents and carers. Leaders and managers at all levels analyse the school's effectiveness accurately and use the outcomes to set priorities and make clear to everyone what is expected. Target-setting is realistic. It is becoming more challenging and signals the high expectations the school has of its students. Rigorous monitoring of students' progress ensures that underachievement is identified promptly and intervention is effective and appropriate to ensure that there are no significant gaps between the attainment of different groups. Improving teaching is recognised as vitally important and good use has been made of coaching and training. As a result attainment and achievement are improving strongly.

The safety and well-being of students is paramount, and safeguarding procedures meet and exceed government requirements. The governing body has a good understanding of the work of the school and provides effective support and challenge. Consequently, it has a clear picture of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. The school is having a

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significant impact on tackling inequality within its community and the way it promotes community cohesion is very strong. A number of initiatives on a local and international level are having a positive impact. A good example is the link with two schools in Africa through the Global Gateway network. The community programme is helping many members of the community to benefit enormously from the school's expertise and resources. Parents and carers say that they are well-informed about their children's progress and the school has worked hard to ensure that parents evenings and consultation evenings are well-attended.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

A smaller-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The very large majority of those who did were supportive of the school. They were most positive about how well the school keeps their child safe, how well their child enjoys school and how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Parents and carers believe that teaching is good, whereas inspectors judged it to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westleigh High School - A College of Technology 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 768 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 46 | 46 | 52 | 51 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 65 | 64 | 35 | 35 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 62 | 61 | 34 | 34 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 59 | 58 | 38 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 58 | 57 | 40 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 53 | 52 | 43 | 43 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 31 | 31 | 61 | 60 | 7 | 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) | 53 | 52 | 42 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 50 | 50 | 44 | 44 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 58 | 57 | 40 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 43 | 43 | 46 | 46 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 59 | 58 | 38 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 66 | 65 | 32 | 32 | 3 | 3 | 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Westleigh High School - A College of Technology, Leigh, WN7 5NL

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school this week. The school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education overall and has some very notable strengths.

We agree that Westleigh has a strong ethos that is linked closely to its local community. We were pleased to see how proud you are of your school. The headteacher and all his staff work tirelessly to ensure that you receive an effective education and are totally committed to your well-being. The school gives you outstanding care, guidance and support and its curriculum meets your needs well. The school's arrangements for keeping you safe are good. This helps you to feel very secure and to enjoy school. You make an excellent contribution to your school and community and the way that you get on exceptionally well with each other is impressive.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory overall, but recognise that significant improvements have taken place. GCSE results are rising significantly because effective steps are being taken to help you improve. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but has not yet led you all to make good progress. We have, therefore, agreed some priorities with your headteacher and governors. These are to:

- raise attainment at Key Stage 4, particularly in English and mathematics
- use test results and other assessment information to plan lessons that are more challenging and that enable you to make better progress
- improve the marking of your work and the quality of the feedback you receive so that you know more clearly how your work could be improved.

You have a very important part to play in this. You can continue to attend school regularly, try your best and strive to be active learners in lessons. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Barnes

Lead inspector

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