

# Millfield Science and Performing Arts College

Belvedere Road, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 5DG

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students and staff feel valued and extremely proud to be a part of 'Team Millfield'. Students thrive in the friendly, safe atmosphere and make good progress.
- The school has improved significantly under the exceptional leadership of the headteacher and a skilled leadership team.
- Students' attainment at GCSE has improved strongly over the last three years. All groups achieve well, making better than expected progress from their starting points.
- Staff are keen to develop their skills and students are eager to learn. Teachers and students have constructive relationships and show great respect for each other.
- Teaching is mostly good. Some teaching is outstanding, when it is honed to meet the precise needs of students with stimulating activities.
- Students are well behaved and hard working. Bullying is extremely rare and swiftly dealt with if it does occur.
- The improvements have been brought about by an uncompromising drive to raise standards and improve teaching. There is highly successful leadership at all levels, including governance.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has been pivotal, but care has been taken to develop leadership and secure a strong capacity to improve further at all levels.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently outstanding. Occasionally teachers do not fully extend students' learning because work is not set at just the right level, particularly for more-able students.
- Students sometimes do not have sufficient opportunity to work independently and organise their own learning.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed as well as they could be in all lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 38 part-lessons, including two which were jointly observed with senior leaders. They sampled work in students' books to gain a view of teaching and students' achievement over time.
- Meetings were held with three representatives of the governing body, a representative of Lancashire local authority, senior and middle leaders and teaching staff.
- Inspectors met with focus groups of students and spoke with them in lessons and around the school.
- They looked at a number of documents including the school's self-evaluation, development planning, records on the quality of teaching, departmental monitoring, provisional results for 2012 and tracking of students' progress across the school.
- Inspectors took account of inspection questionnaires returned by staff and 56 responses to Ofsted's on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Jean Kendall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Barbara Dutton

Additional Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Janet Peckett

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average sized secondary school. The number of students on roll is increasing as the number of students entering the school in Year 7 has increased.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- A much lower than average proportion of students is of minority ethnic heritage.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The number of students who join the school other than at the normal time is above average although the number leaving at other than the usual time is low.
- The school has a national award for information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school exceeds the government's floor targets, which set the minimum standards and rate of progress expected of secondary school students.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding, so that all students make the best possible progress by:
  - ensuring that teachers systematically check on students' learning throughout lessons and intervene with further explanation or challenge, so that students' understanding deepens and they make rapid progress
  - making certain that higher ability students are extended in all lessons through in-depth questioning and demanding activities
  - providing all students with opportunities to develop their independent enquiry skills and organise their own learning
  - fully integrating the teaching of literacy and numeracy into subjects across the curriculum to enable all students to extend their key skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSEs has risen at a much faster rate than it has nationally. In 2012, the proportion gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics was well above the 2011 national average, and above expectations based on the students' prior attainment.
- Improvement is also evident at Key Stage 3. More students gained Level 5 in mathematics, English and science than has previously been the case and the majority made better than expected progress from their starting points on entry to the school.
- The impressive upward trend is the result of a concerted whole school drive to improve teaching. Students perform consistently well in science and English where teaching has been strong over time.
- Students' previously low achievement in mathematics improved considerably in 2012 due to better teaching and curriculum planning. Where students' progress is not as good as it could be, for example in design and technology, leaders are taking appropriate action to ensure that teaching improves.
- The proportion of students achieving well in humanities and modern foreign languages lags behind that in other subjects because few students have opted to take GCSEs in these subjects in the past. Recent appointments and review of the curriculum are ensuring that more students have access to these subjects.
- The school makes good use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support to eligible students. All teachers have a high awareness of target groups, so students' additional needs are similarly well attended to in lessons. As a result, the gap between these students' achievements and that of their peers is narrower than it is nationally.
- Students with special educational needs, supported at school action plus, make rapid progress in intervention groups and are effectively supported by teaching assistants in lessons. Those supported at school action made slower progress in the past but are now making similar progress to that of their peers because teachers take account of their individual education plans in lessons. Additional support with reading is also paying dividends.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding, particularly in science, English and mathematics. School leaders are monitoring the small proportion of weaker teaching closely, and improving it through professional development and effective performance management.
- The most successful lessons provide interesting activities closely matched to students' learning needs and abilities. Teaching assistants are successfully deployed to support students without impeding their ability to work independently. In a science lesson focusing on the use of medicine, for example, well structured activities and in-depth questioning extended the learning of all students.
- Another feature of highly effective teaching is the continuous assessment of students' progress throughout the lesson. This was seen in English lessons where teachers gave students plenty of time to develop their own ideas but improved the quality of their work with timely interjections and helpful critique.
- In a small proportion of lessons teachers talk for too long and intervene too much, leaving students with limited opportunities to reflect on longer pieces of work, solve challenging problems or take responsibility for their learning. Questioning is not always sufficiently probing and activities are not at a high enough level to extend the learning of more-able students.

- There is a consistently effective approach to marking and target setting across all departments. Students' learning targets set high expectations and give a clear indication of their next learning steps. The 'WWW' (what works well) and 'EBI' (even better if) approach to marking ensures they have a good understanding of their strengths and the ways in which they can improve the quality of their work.
- Students with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive additional support that is very well matched to their needs. Teachers also make good use of individual education plans in class lessons, to make sure barriers to learning are minimised.
- Students' confidence and social skills are promoted extremely well through plentiful opportunities for collaborative learning. A well planned curriculum provides a range of activities which encourages students to consider spiritual, moral and cultural issues and dilemmas.
- The reading, mathematical and communication skills of all students are improving well in English and mathematics lessons. Speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively, through meaningful opportunities for discussion in all subjects. However, opportunities to develop other literacy and numerical skills are missed in some lessons.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students feel valued, confident and at ease in school. They are punctual at the start of the day and get off to a prompt start in lessons. Attendance is improving and is in line with the national average. The number of students excluded for poor behaviour has dramatically reduced in the last three years and the rate of exclusion is now low.
- Students are well behaved and keen to do their best in lessons. They are mature and co-operative when given opportunities to organise their own learning and work collaboratively. Occasionally, students lose concentration when activities are not matched closely enough to their learning needs, but disruption to lessons is rare. It is well managed if it does occur, to ensure continuity in learning for all students.
- Students are courteous, polite and well mannered in areas around the school. They say they feel extremely safe in school because bullying rarely occurs, teachers are approachable and quickly sort out any concerns. The texting system is popular, assuring students that they can easily access advice and support. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including risks associated with use of the internet, and know what to do if they feel threatened.
- Students are able to contribute to the running of the school through numerous avenues, for example, as form captains, 'climate cops', restorative prefects and council members. They are keen and confident to do so.
- The many extra-curricular activities give students excellent opportunities to develop their talents, be creative and achieve acclaim. Several students have been supported to enter national competitions and they have been remarkably successful. Their successes include first prizes in design, writing and film making competitions and presentations to the European Parliament.
- All 56 parents who completed Parent View report that their child is happy, feels safe and is well looked after. They are confident that behaviour is well managed. Virtually all parents feel that the school deals effectively with bullying.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- School leaders have driven through rapid and sustained improvement in students' outcomes over the last three years. Students' achievement at GCSE has risen at a much faster rate than that seen nationally. Their self-motivation and thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their dramatically improved behaviour and attendance.
- The headteacher has been pivotal to this change in culture, but has ensured that other leaders have developed highly effective leadership skills and are accountable. Leaders at all levels regularly check on the work of teachers and make sure that students are making the best possible

progress. Improvement plans are of consistently high quality and swift action is taken if any teachers are not performing as well as expected.

- The culture of learning is fully accepted amongst staff and students. Staff want the very best for the students and have high ambitions for the school as a whole. They also have high expectations of themselves and are constantly seeking ways to improve their performance. The school 'buzzes' with professional dialogue as teachers learn from each other and share best practice.
- Departments work very effectively together to share what works well and solve problems. For example, the mathematics and English departments have developed effective strategies to support the development of essential literacy skills for mathematics. Leaders recognise that such developments can be usefully applied to other subjects.
- Performance management is very well established so all staff understand the expectations of them and their accountability for students' progress and attainment. They have clear targets to support whole school improvement as well as their own professional development. They are keen and able to engage in a range of professional development to improve their practice.
- Students are very well prepared for their future lives through a broad and relevant curriculum and rich opportunities for additional learning. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and excellent progress in essential social skills.
- They develop into confident, caring and thoughtful young people during their time at school. The curriculum provides high quality insight into moral and ethical issues affecting the world today, such as climate change and sustainability, and spiritual and cultural issues at both a personal and global level.
- There is a good balance between vocational and academic subjects. Virtually all students go on to further learning that is suited to their interest and ability, at the sixth form college, college of further education or apprenticeships.
- Leaders and the governing body promote equality and tackle discrimination extremely successfully. Staff know students very well and every effort is taken to remove barriers to learning for any who may be disadvantaged by challenging circumstances. Students eligible for pupil premium funding make rapid progress due to expert support and close monitoring of their needs and achievements.
- Parents who completed Parent View express a high degree of confidence in the leadership and management. The vast majority feel that the school responds appropriately to any concerns they raise and they are kept well informed. They feel their children are well taught and make good progress and virtually all would recommend the school to other parents.
- The governance of the school:
  - The governing body has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has an uncompromising focus on raising standards and being the very best school.
  - Governors have an excellent range of experience and skills to provide strong challenge and rigorous debate as well as support to school leaders. They have a highly effective approach to monitoring and tackling underperforming teaching and supporting any students who are not making the expected progress.
  - They are knowledgeable about current issues, for example, keeping a close eye on the school's use of pupil premium funding and its impact, and on students' achievement in subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate qualification.
  - The governing body carries out all statutory duties exceptionally well. There are clear procedures to ensure the safety of all students and all safeguarding requirements are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119714
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401867

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	719
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Harry Pindred
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sean Bullen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2009
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