

Heysham High School Sports College

Limes Avenue, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA3 1HS

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good either across the school or within departments so that in a minority of lessons students' progress is too slow.
- Weaknesses in mathematics teaching mean that many students do not learn rapidly enough. As a result they do not all make the progress that they should relative to their different abilities.
- The sixth form requires improvement because several subjects have low pass rates at GCE AS level and teachers' progress tracking is not sufficiently accurate at identifying those at risk of failing so that additional help can be given.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in English is good as a result of good teaching that enables students to make good progress.
- The school provides highly effective pastoral support for students who need extra help for a variety of reasons.
- There have been steady improvements since the last inspection as a result of effective leadership and management. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics has increased. GCE A level pass rates have improved and a higher proportion of students gain high grades.
- The curriculum is extremely well planned and managed and provides a wide range of opportunities to meet the needs of students with different abilities and aspirations. Guidance is effective in ensuring that students' choices are appropriate.
- Students' behaviour is good because they enjoy school. They have good relationships with their teachers who act as good role models.
- Students' personal skills are developed well so that they become confident and articulate young adults who are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons including two joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle managers, and four groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, and the comments made by a parent who asked to speak to an inspector during the inspection. The results of a school parent and carer questionnaire were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's assessment data on students' progress over time, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring documentation and records related to behaviour and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Ruth James, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Seneviratne	Her Majesty's Inspector
Robert Birtwell	Additional Inspector
Denah Jones	Additional Inspector
Zahid Aziz	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools.
- The proportion of students funded under the pupil premium is greater than that seen nationally. The pupil premium provides schools with additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and students who have been looked after continuously for more than six months.
- A very large majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is lower than the national average. However, the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs, or supported at school action plus, is slightly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The sixth form is run in collaboration with three other local secondary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that more lessons are good or outstanding by:
 - increasing the pace of learning
 - developing questioning so that it extends students' thinking rather than relying on very brief answers
 - raising expectations and providing suitably challenging work, especially for the more-able students
 - ensuring that marking provides clear feedback to students about how to improve their work and reach the next steps.
- Improve students' progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that individual targets are suitably challenging and based on nationally expected or faster rates of progress
 - raising teachers' expectations, especially for lower-ability groups, and speeding up lessons so that more is learned in the time available
 - eliminating the occasional low-level disruption that occurs by providing work that engages all students' interest, is appropriately demanding and promotes rapid progress.
- Improve the outcomes for GCE AS level courses where pass rates are low by:
 - improving attendance in the sixth form
 - ensuring that assessments are accurate so that progress tracking can be used to identify students at risk of not achieving the grades they are capable of
 - planning subject interventions and support for students identified as at risk.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics has increased markedly since the previous inspection, although it remains well below the national average. A significant contributor to this improvement is the rise in standards of attainment in English. Students achieve well in a wide range of work-related courses.
- Literacy skills are improving. Recent innovations such as extra literacy lessons for Year 7 and 8 students with weaker literacy skills are improving these students' reading and writing skills.
- Although progress in mathematics is improving, especially for the more-able students, it is not rapid enough for students to make the progress that would be expected given their starting points.
- School progress data show clearly improving trends in the proportions of students achieving the expected levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 3. This is indicative of improving rates of progress in Key Stage 3, especially given students below average starting points. This is the result of a strong management focus on improving teaching and learning to ensure that students entering Key Stage 4 are well prepared for their GCSE and other courses, and is a major factor in the school's increased predicted outcomes for 2013.
- Although there are some differences in the performance of different groups of students these vary from year to year and there is no particular pattern or ongoing underachievement of specific groups. The attainment gap between students eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not eligible is smaller than that found nationally. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers as a result of appropriate teaching and support. In the sixth form, GCE A-level results improved significantly in 2012. Pass rates were similar to the national average and the proportion of students gaining high grades rose substantially. Increasing numbers of sixth-form students are taking one or more work-related courses and achievement for these courses is good. Pass rates for GCE AS levels are variable and although they improved in 2012 they are low for a few subjects.
- Students' personal skills are well developed through their subjects and the wide range of enrichment opportunities such as sports and drama. Progression to further education and training, or employment at the end of Key Stage 4 is very high with all students placed, many choosing the school's own sixth form where staff take care to find suitable options for students of differing abilities

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they are friendly and encouraging, so that students respond readily and willingly.
- In the best lessons these good relationships create a very positive climate for learning because teachers also have high expectations. Their genuine love of their subject enthuses students who readily tackle the challenging work set. These well-planned lessons include a variety of activities which lead to enthusiastic participation in learning. The pace is rapid and work set is at the right levels enabling all students to make good progress. Where questioning is effective it enables students to deepen their understanding and make progress.
- The best teachers are sensitive to the difficulties faced by students who may need extra help or who find it difficult to work well with others. They plan group work carefully and monitor progress astutely, intervening when necessary. The best teaching helps to build resilience and independence in students.
- In less effective lessons expectations are not high enough and the pace is slow. Teachers do not ensure that all students have work at the right level so that progress is not as rapid. Use of questions may only require brief answers without developing more reasoned or analytical responses. The activities set, although they may be enjoyable, do not actually develop knowledge and understanding greatly. Occasionally, teachers do not make the best use of the

presence of teaching assistants to support students.

- Specific support in reading and writing for students who join the school with weak literacy skills is enabling them to improve their reading and writing but there are some missed opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum. Good examples were seen but the picture is inconsistent. Marking does not always identify mistakes such as spelling errors. Some students' work is poorly presented and handwriting difficult to read. Although some lessons in other subjects do include the development of mathematical skills, again the picture across subjects is uneven and there are many missed opportunities to develop these skills.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved, and some good teaching was seen, especially for older, more-able students. This is resulting in improved rates of progress for this group. However, in too many lessons, especially for lower-ability students, learning is slower because of weaknesses in teaching and occasional low-level disruptive behaviour. In such cases individual targets are not demanding enough, too little is achieved in the time available or students do not tackle the tasks set with sustained interest because the tasks are mundane and do not encourage them to think more deeply and work things out for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students say they feel very safe in school and parents agree. The school is very inclusive and there is a caring ethos.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Students' attitudes to learning are good. Students usually work well together in groups and are supportive of each other in paired work such as reading out loud in extra literacy lessons. They appreciate the support provided by their teachers and are generally respectful of teaching staff and are polite and helpful to visitors.
- The school has a new behaviour support policy and has introduced a wide variety of support units and procedures to meet the needs of various students. These include a unit for students who need short-term help with their behaviour, and another for those requiring longer-term interventions or at risk of exclusion. Behaviour over time is improving. The number of behaviour incidents recorded has fallen and figures for re-offence are low.
- Bullying of all forms, including homophobic bullying, is rare. Students are confident that school staff will listen to any concerns raised and take appropriate action. Students enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and are well supported. Extra help and support is provided through specific projects for small groups of students. One parent who spoke to an inspector was full of praise for the school and the support provided for her son and family through the family matters group.
- Overall, there has been a small recent improvement in attendance which is close to the national figure. Attendance in the sixth form is lower than in the rest of the school. Permanent exclusions have reduced significantly. Despite the improvements in behaviour over time, there are some inconsistencies across school, with occasional low-level disruption in some areas.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher provides firm and authoritative leadership and is ably supported by a capable senior team. Responsibilities are clearly defined and managers are held accountable. The headteacher and senior leaders are highly visible around the school and are respected by staff and students alike. At middle leadership level there are many strengths but there remains some inconsistency between departments.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is given a high priority and much professional development work has contributed to improvements in teaching. Nevertheless, the impact of this is uneven across departments.
- The schools progress-tracking system for Key Stages 3 and 4 provides a wealth of data about the performance of different groups and this is being used effectively to improve teaching, and plan extra help. This is having an impact on students' progress, which in turn has led to

improved outcomes

- Leadership of the sixth form has improved guidance on course choice and strengthened the system for monitoring progress but it is still not accurate enough to identify underachievement early, so that suitable subject support and additional help can be planned.
- The school's capacity to improve further is demonstrated by the improvements since the previous inspection. There have been notable improvements in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics, in teaching and attainment in English, and in the sixth-form results. These are all the result of clear and coherent leadership strategies that have been implemented effectively and monitored carefully.
- The curriculum is a real strength of the school. It makes a significant contribution to students' achievement, to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is effective in providing equality of opportunity. Great care is taken to ensure that every individual is catered for, and managers make a clear link between behaviour and the curriculum offer. The setting and banding arrangements in Key Stage 3 ensure that the curriculum is well tailored to different needs. In Key Stage 4, the wide range of options and pathways is enhanced by off-site provision in the local college and with training providers. Appropriate guidance ensures that students are well matched to courses. Specific interventions and support are provided where students are identified as at risk of underachieving.
- Within the sixth form there is an expanding range of work-related courses as well as GCE AS and A levels. A good choice of additional enrichment opportunities helps to prepare students for their chosen next steps.
- Strenuous efforts are made to work with parents, including those who are reluctant. Attendance at parents' evenings has improved and there are examples of very effective family support work.
- Teachers are held to account for their students' achievements through the performance-management system which ensures that those who are not delivering the expected outcomes do not progress through the salary threshold. Performance objectives include a requirement that agreed proportions of students meet their attainment targets, and a focus on developing and improving teaching skills.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are thorough in their approach to their strategic role overseeing the work of school and setting a clear direction. They know the school and its community well. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are ambitious for its future.
 - The governing body has played an important role in enabling the school to tackle weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. It has had a key role in the development of collaborative sixth-form arrangements with other local schools which has successfully broadened post-16 opportunities, and this is helping to improve achievement in the sixth form.
 - Monitoring of the school's performance is robust. Leaders and managers at different levels are required to present their work to governors and are held to account for progress in their areas of responsibility.

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

Unique reference number	119711
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401866

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1122
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Needham
Headteacher	Mr Maurice Graham
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2009
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