

Stanley High School

Fleetwood Road, Southport, Merseyside PR9 9TF

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement is not yet good. Although it is improving quickly, too many students do not do as well as they could in mathematics and there is too much variation in how well students achieve between subjects.
- Boys and more-able students do not do as well as they could. The number of students gaining the highest A* and A grades in GCSE examinations is below the national average in many subjects.
- Teaching is improving but is not yet resulting in good progress for all groups of students and across subjects.
- In a few lessons students do not behave well and make less progress in their learning. This is sometimes the case when staff are new to the school. At other times students lose concentration when lessons are dull.
- Some senior and middle leaders are not as effective as others in their contribution to securing and sustaining improvements to the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear view of how the school needs to improve and has high ambitions for the school and students' achievements. The headteacher, the governing body and most leaders are determined to drive through improvements. Weaknesses in staffing, teaching and the curriculum have been tackled successfully.
- Rigorous checks on teaching and students' progress and the carefully planned training and support for teachers contribute to improvements to teaching and students' achievement. Students in danger of falling behind in their work get plenty of extra support so that their progress improves.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above is better than the national average. The standards students reach by the age of 16 in English, in some science courses and in physical education are above the national average.
- Students feel safe in school and they behave well whilst in and around the school. Many students enjoy school and learning and this is reflected in the above average rate of attendance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 35 lessons. Two of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. A sample of students' written work in English and mathematics was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with staff and leaders, governors, students from each year group and a representative of the local authority.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 29 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View), recent surveys of parents carried out by the school, discussions held in school with a small number of parents attending a coffee morning and information sharing session, and through telephone conversations requested by a small number of parents.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional Inspector
Joan Low	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stanley High is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- An average proportion of students are eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion of students speak English as an additional language.
- Of the disabled students and those with special educational needs, the proportion supported at school action is below average and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has special resourced provision for physically disabled students. Currently, there are very few students receiving this provision.
- Courses followed by a small proportion of students away from the school site include vocational courses based at Southport College, Beacon Learning and the Oakfield centre.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher was appointed from September 2011. There have been considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that all groups of students make consistently good progress across all subjects, especially in mathematics, by:
 - increasing the number of lessons where teaching is good and outstanding, and eliminating inadequate teaching
 - making sure that teachers give students suitable tasks that help them to make good progress, whatever their ability, and that the tasks are neither too easy nor too hard
 - cutting down on the time that students listen to teachers talk in lessons and giving students more time to get on with tasks, discuss their work and learn on their own
 - setting high expectations of behaviour and maintaining students' interest in learning in all lessons
 - bringing greater consistency to the quality of teachers' marking of written work so that it is clear what has to be improved and so that students are given the chance to reflect on teachers' comments and make improvements to their work.
- Improve academic achievement further, particularly in mathematics, and for boys and more-able students by:
 - bringing greater consistency to the progress students make across subjects
 - making sure that all teaching sets high expectations of more-able students so that they do their very best and the number gaining the very highest grades in their GCSE examinations increases
 - providing more practical, real-life activities in mathematics so that students appreciate its relevance to their lives
 - further improving the curriculum so that students can choose courses that help them to achieve well.
- Bring greater consistency to the contribution made to school improvement by all leaders across the school by providing further support and training to improve leadership skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection results in GCSE examinations have improved. Improvements to staffing, teaching and the curriculum are helping to accelerate progress but achievement is not yet good across subjects or for all different groups of students.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more C grades at GCSE is above average. Standards in English, in some science courses and in physical education are above average.
- There are too many variations in achievement between subjects. Although now improving quickly, achievement in mathematics is not as good as in English. Improved teaching and extra support for students in danger of falling behind, many of whom are boys, are helping students to do better in mathematics. As a result, the gap between standards in mathematics and English when students started school is now closing.
- Results in art and design, design and technology, business studies, geography, music, and hospitality and catering were below average in 2011. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2012 and information on the progress of students currently in school show improvement, but this is not yet consistent across all subjects.
- Boys' progress is not as good as girls'. Extra support is helping boys to catch up. Leaders have swiftly made changes to the curriculum so more students, particularly boys, now follow courses in which they are likely to achieve well and that will support them well in the future. The small proportion of students following courses that are held off-site are well supported and achieve similarly to their peers. The number of students leaving the school who do not continue in education, training or employment is very low.
- Not all more-able students are fulfilling their potential. As teaching improves and provides more work that pushes more-able students the proportion of students gaining the highest grades A* and A at GCSE is improving, but this is not yet consistent across subjects. Students entered for examinations early, including in mathematics, are now given the opportunity to re-sit and gain higher grades. This was not always the case.
- Disabled students, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Individual needs are identified quickly and teachers and other adults provide the support they need. Physically disabled students receiving the special resourced provision make good progress because of the carefully targeted support alongside the opportunity to develop independence.
- Students known to be eligible for pupil premium are improving at a similar rate to their peers so that the gap between their performance and the overall national average is closing. They perform better than students in most schools in English and mathematics.
- The schools' attention to promoting equality of opportunity is evident in its increased efforts to analyse and encourage good progress for all different groups of students.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving quickly and is helping students to make better progress in their learning. During the inspection much of the teaching seen in lessons was good and some was outstanding. Occasionally, teaching was inadequate. However, over a period of time, teaching has not been good enough to help all students to achieve well in all their subjects. There are good features to the teaching but some lessons are weaker.
- Most staff have positive and supportive relationships with students and expect a lot of them so that students are willing learners and behaviour is good in most lessons. A few students do not respond well to lessons that are dull because they are required to listen to teachers talking for too long and they do not have the chance to work on their own.
- Teachers set clear targets for what students will learn so that most lessons are purposeful and

students know what they are trying to achieve. It is not clear in all lessons what teachers expect of more-able students and tasks do not always demand enough of them.

- Better checks on students' progress and the way teachers use this information mean that most students know what their individual target levels and grades are, but teachers do not consistently plan tasks that match students' different needs.
- Most teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and recognise when students do not fully understand. Through good questioning teachers help students to think through more difficult concepts and develop their understanding. However, in some lessons teachers do not encourage discussion between students; most discussion is between teachers and students rather than amongst students themselves.
- In mathematics not enough lessons give students tasks and opportunities to think how the mathematics they are doing is relevant to their everyday lives.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is often helpful in showing students what they need to do to improve. However, students do not always know how to improve their work in all subjects and they are not always given the opportunity to do so in lessons.
- Teaching assistants and other adults give good assistance to many students. They successfully develop students' independence alongside providing well targeted support for learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Most students enjoy school and feel safe. This is reflected in above average rates of attendance.
- Students are courteous and well behaved in and around the school. Few parents express concerns about behaviour.
- However, students do not always respond well to staff new to the school. Some students are more reluctant to learn and often chat to each other rather than concentrate on learning when tasks are dull.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe in many situations. They know about the many ways in which students can be intimidated and bullied. They say that there is very little bullying and that, on the rare occasions it happens, they are confident that, with the help of staff in school, it is sorted out quickly.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher, most leaders and the governing body share a strong commitment to improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement. The headteacher has been a very strong driving force in bringing about improvements and in setting high expectations of staff, students and leaders. Subjects and the pastoral system have been reorganised and the responsibilities of senior and middle leaders have been redefined. However, not all leaders have developed effective leadership skills so that their contribution to improving the school is uneven. Although improvements in teaching, achievement and the curriculum are evident in some parts of the school, these are not consistently found across the school.
- Since the previous inspection the systems to check on the effectiveness of teaching on students' progress carried out by senior and subject leaders are far more rigorous. They help to identify what needs to be improved in teaching and its impact on students' progress.
- Training is much more closely focused on the priorities for the school and individual staff needs, and is helping to improve teaching. More staff are contributing to training within the school and the sharing of best ways of working amongst staff.
- The local authority has made a good contribution to supporting the improvement of the school, especially through the provision of training and professional development in response to the needs identified by the school.

- Leaders have been well aware of the shortcomings in some elements of the curriculum for students in Key Stage 4 when not all courses provided worthwhile qualifications or helped them to move on to suitable education or training. Improvements to give students better chances of success and in developing basic skills in literacy and communication are helping students to improve their overall performance. A small proportion of students follow courses away from school which better meet their individual needs than those at the school. Staff check on how well these students are doing and support them in making the most of these opportunities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are kept very well informed of the performance of the school and how well teachers are teaching. They contribute to rigorous decisions on promotions and the movement of staff up the pay scale. They have received good training and are able to raise relevant questions that hold leaders to account for how well teachers and students are performing. Governors bring a good range of expertise to their role and are keen to work with parents and students to work out how best to make improvements. Governors have been successful in re-engaging many sections of the local community in the work of the school so that the number of students entering Year 7 is now increasing following a period of decline. Many parents express their satisfaction with the school and recognise how much it has improved over the past four terms. The governing body is aware of how the school spends its pupil premium funding. It keeps a close check on how well students with entitlement to this funding make progress. However, it does not look closely at how each item that is spent contributes to their better progress.

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	104944
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	400745

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	739
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Molyneux
Headteacher	Edward Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2010
Telephone number	01704 228940
Fax number	01704 232701
Email address	enquiries@stanley.sefton.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

