

# Blackburn Central High School

Haslingden Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 3HJ

**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 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		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, key leaders and the governing body have worked successfully as a very strong team on improving the school since the previous inspection. They are well supported by other leaders and staff. The ambitions of staff, students and parents are much higher than before.
- Leaders have been determined and successful in improving teaching and students' achievement. Frequent checks on students' progress and plenty of support for individuals in danger of falling behind have helped to accelerate progress.
- Teaching has been checked frequently for its quality and good training and support for staff have led to improvements. As a consequence of good teaching, students are making good progress and the results they gain in examinations, especially in English and mathematics, are far better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The move to a new school building and the increase in the number of students on roll has been managed very well.
- Students behave well and are considerate of others. They feel safe and secure. Students from many different backgrounds get on well together.
- Rates of attendance have improved significantly since the previous inspection and now are broadly average.
- The school provides high quality care and support for all students, particularly those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. This, alongside the carefully planned courses of study, helps students to be well prepared to move on to further education, training or employment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. It is not yet consistently strong enough to lead to outstanding progress. The proportion of outstanding and good lessons is not high enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 part-lessons. Three of these were observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Inspectors visited school assemblies, reading time in form groups and registration periods.
- Meetings were held with leaders and staff, the strategic partnership leader, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of students from each year group.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to provide a summary.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through a survey carried out by the school earlier in the term of over 70 parents of Years 7 and 8 students.

## Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- In September 2012, the school changed its name and moved into a newly built school.
- The number of students on roll has increased significantly because students have joined the school from another one nearby that closed down.
- The school site is shared with Crosshill, a special school for students with moderate learning difficulties aged from 11 to 16 years.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is above average. An above average proportion of students is supported at school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- An above average proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups. The majority are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- An above average proportion of students are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (government funding to support disadvantaged students).
- The number of students leaving and joining the school at times other than the usual start in Year 7 is above average.
- Alternative educational provision is provided for a small number of students by Blackburn College and Fernhurst School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- The school specialises in mathematics and computing.
- Since the previous inspection the school has become part of the East Blackburn Community Trust. The school has worked in close partnership with Tauheedhul Islam Girls' School. A strategic partnership leader from the staff of this school spends three days per week in Blackburn Central High.
- There have been many staff changes since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that students make even more rapid progress and attainment rises further by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan tasks that get the most out of all students in every lesson, especially the more able students
  - making sure teachers spend less time talking in lessons and provide more time for students to learn actively, including working things out for themselves or discussing their work with others
  - providing more opportunities for students to discuss their work at a higher level in offering opinions and explanations to each other so they have greater confidence in their ability to communicate clearly
  - providing more opportunities for students to practise and improve their numeracy skills when they are working in different subjects
  - improving the quality of teachers' marking of students' work so that it shows students how to correct inaccuracies and provides an explanation of how they can further develop their skills
  - making sure that teachers have more chances to share what works best in lessons with each other.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Results in GCSE examinations have improved significantly since the previous inspection, especially in English and mathematics, from 11% of students gaining Grade C or better in both subjects in 2009 to 53% in 2012. Although results in English and mathematics are below the national average, this represents good progress for those students who entered the school with well below average attainment in Year 7. Inspection evidence shows that this improvement is set to continue.
- The school has exceeded challenging targets for overall standards and progress over the past two years. Students achieve well in the school's specialist subjects of mathematics and computing. The school's policy of taking examinations earlier than in the summer of Year 11 in mathematics does not prevent more-able students from gaining the higher grades. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades, A\* and A, is improving.
- Good progress is evident in most lessons and work in students' books shows that students are working at a good rate. Students are making good gains in communication, literacy and numeracy skills. Regular reading for pleasure and learning is encouraged across the school.
- Students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make better progress than students in similar circumstances nationally and year-by-year they are catching up on all students. Most of this funding is spent effectively on providing extra adults to support these students. Some is spent on providing uniform and essential equipment.
- The school makes sure that every student has an equal chance to do well. Students of Pakistani heritage make particularly good progress. Students who join the school mid-year or key stage are well supported and make similar progress to other students. Many of these students are learning English as an additional language and make similarly good progress because of the effective specialist support they receive.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are identified quickly and the carefully targeted support meets their needs well.
- Students in danger of falling behind their academic targets are identified quickly and staff move swiftly to make sure that these students are given every chance to catch up.
- Students following courses that are held off the school premises achieve well and are well prepared for their futures. This is because the courses are checked to make sure they are suited to each individual. The proportion of students who do not move into further education, training or employment at the age of 16 has decreased considerably since the previous inspection and is around average.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Good teaching has led to significant improvements in students' achievement.
- Teachers expect a great deal of students' behaviour and progress. A positive climate, that encourages good learning, is created in lessons. Relationships are supportive and students appreciate the help they get from staff.
- Lessons are purposeful and students know what they are trying to achieve. Teachers make clear what will be learned and how this relates to grades and examination criteria and the personal targets students are working towards.
- Students learn a good amount in most lessons because they are busy and active, finding things out for themselves or discussing their work with each other. There are plenty of chances to learn to communicate well and teachers encourage the correct use of technical language.
- In outstanding lessons, teachers make sure that the work helps every student, whatever their abilities, to do well. Students are totally involved and happily work on their own. Teachers ask

questions that probe the way that students are thinking and students are encouraged to debate and discuss their work in depth.

- Where teaching is not yet outstanding, or in the small amount of teaching that requires improvement, teachers do not always get the most out of every student; all students complete the same tasks and these are not hard enough for the more able students, or occasionally, are too complex for some students. Occasionally, students spend too long listening to teachers and consequently, are not busy and active enough. Teachers do not always make the most of chances for students to debate and discuss their work at a higher level where they might offer opinions and explanations to each other.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is usually very helpful and shows students how to improve. This is not the case for all staff, and students are not always expected to carry out the improvements suggested.
- Other adults work effectively with students, particularly on building students' self-confidence and ability to work on their own.

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

- Students have transferred into the new building and school community very successfully and are proud of their new school. Students from a wide range of backgrounds get on very well with each other. They also get along happily with students from the special school on the same site.
- Behaviour is good and students feel safe. They say bullying is rare and know what to do should it occur. Students know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using modern technology. They know about different forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, and the need to respect people, whatever their differences.
- Disruption to learning in lessons is uncommon. Most students are ambitious to reach their targets. They are keen to take part in extra sessions designed to help them to do well.
- The school's improved approach to managing students' behaviour means that students know what is expected and they have chances to reflect on and improve their behaviour. They consider the rewards and sanctions are fair. The number of students excluded has reduced significantly. There are examples of individuals who have benefitted from the high-quality support offered by staff, helping students to stay interested in education and to be better prepared for adult life.
- Students' attendance has improved enormously from very low to broadly average and there are far fewer students who are absent for long periods. The school's pursuit of students whose absence is a concern and the range of support offered to these students and their families are very successful.
- Students take their responsibilities seriously and develop good leadership skills. Their ideas were used extensively when planning the new school. For example, students helped to design the new school uniform.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, key leaders and the governing body set high expectations of the school community. Since the last inspection, they have brought about significant improvements in students' achievement. They have successfully managed the move into a new building and the development of a new school community.
- Leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is performing. Action plans set out clear priorities and underpin the drive for improvement. Strong systems for checking on the performance of students and staff are helping to support continuous improvement.
- Students are given challenging academic targets that have raised their ambitions. Leaders at all levels make good use of information on students' progress to check any slowing down. Checks

are followed up swiftly with well-thought-out support that helps students catch up.

- Teaching has improved because leaders carry out rigorous checks on its quality. This leads to staff training and support that is well targeted to the areas that need to improve. Systems to manage the performance of staff (staff appraisal) are rigorous and linked to school priorities and current teaching standards. Staff are gaining confidence in leading staff training. There is scope to share what works well with each other more often in order to improve teaching further.
  - The courses and subjects on offer has much improved. More students are able to pursue the subjects included in the English Baccalaureate. A range of vocational courses meets students' needs well. The number of students taking courses off the school site has reduced but staff maintain a watchful eye on how well these students are getting on. Students' communication and literacy skills are practised often in different subjects. Although students develop secure numeracy skills in mathematics lessons, students are not practising these skills often enough in different subjects.
  - The local authority has made a strong contribution to school improvement. It encouraged the establishment of the East Blackburn Community Trust and has supported the partnership with a highly successful local school.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors bring a good range of relevant skills and have had training on their roles. They have high ambitions for the school and are a driving force in bringing about improvement. They work well with the Trustees to ensure the school plays its part in the whole community. Governors hold leaders closely to account for the school's performance and are kept well informed about students' achievement compared to the national picture. They make sure that better pay and promotion of staff are closely related to performance in the classroom. They are aware of where teaching is in need of additional support. Governors work effectively with the local authority to maintain a balanced budget. They know how pupil premium funding is spent and that achievement for these students is improving but have not looked closely at the impact of each of the different ways in which the funding is used. Governors make sure that students and staff are kept safe.
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## 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>	134906
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	402651

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>	745
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mufti Hamid Patel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Chambers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 505700
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