

# Copley High School

Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 3RR

**Inspection dates** 27–28 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 school is now much better than it was. Results are improving fast and are close to national averages.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics and English is increasing rapidly.
- The headteacher and the senior team provide powerful and inspirational leadership that is admired by staff and students.
- Students enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are better than in most schools.
- Action to improve the reading and writing skills of students is having a good impact.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, make good progress and are well looked after.
- There is a calm and business-like atmosphere in the school; most students are keen to learn and do well.
- The school is excellent at improving the skills of teachers. More teaching is now good or better.
- Ambitious targets for students are carefully set and regularly reviewed, so that those who do not make good progress can quickly be supported.
- There is a good range of subjects available and many popular lunchtime and after-school activities.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and some is not good enough.
- The low level of skills in reading, writing and communication with which many students arrive in the school, hold them back from the highest achievement.
- Some improvements in the school need more time to show their full benefit.
- A small minority of older students are not well motivated and are making less progress than they should.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 36 lessons, some jointly with members of the school’s senior leadership team, an assembly, a tutor period, break and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the teaching and support staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and several groups of students.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at documents including; records of the monitoring of teaching; the school improvement plan; records relating to safeguarding; published data and school records of students’ attainment and progress. They also looked at examples of students’ work.
- Inspectors looked at the records of some students who receive additional support because of learning needs or social and emotional needs.
- The inspection also took into account the views of 16 parents through the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 46 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

John Peckham, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Patrick Feerick

Additional Inspector

Janet Pruchniewicz

Additional Inspector

Susan Wareing

Her Majesty’s Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Copley High School is smaller than most secondary schools, and the proportion of girls is higher than average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for additional financial support through the pupil premium is higher than average. The proportion of students who have minority ethnic heritage has increased in the last few years and is now similar to that in most schools. A relatively small number of students have a first language that is not English.
- The number of disabled students and those with special educational needs is comparable to that in most schools.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in 2010.
- A total of 16 students follow part-time courses at Tameside College or undertake work-based learning with local employers.
- The school site is shared with the Copley Sports Centre.
- Plans are in place for the school to convert to an academy early in 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved Healthy School status, the Information, Advice and Guidance silver award and is a national flagship school for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

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

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring all staff have a clear understanding of what outstanding teaching in their subject can be
  - encouraging teachers to be creative and exciting in their planning, to develop more 'awe and wonder' in students' learning
  - ensuring all staff consistently use high quality learning intentions
  - further developing the use of questioning to deepen students' understanding
  - ensuring that all marking provides helpful pointers to help students improve
  - supporting high aspirations for all students, in every lesson, with a range of strategies to ensure that all abilities have routes to achieve them.
- Continue to improve students' literacy through:
  - more focused whole-school improvements in the presentation of written work so that students can have a greater pride in it
  - more structured approaches in all subjects to promote the development of speaking and listening skills
  - full exploitation of communication technologies to boost motivation and raise standards.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The attainment of most students when they enter the school is slightly below the national average. Students' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening are particularly low compared to most schools.
- The results of students in GCSE examinations have improved steadily over the last three years, and are now around the national average. Attainment in mathematics is especially good. In some subjects, such as history and art, attainment has risen and many more students are gaining the highest grades.
- The proportion of students gaining five passes at GCSE including English and mathematics rose significantly in 2011. However, while mathematics results improved further in 2012, a number of students expected to achieve a C-grade in English were affected by national changes in the grade boundaries. Although more students gained A\*-B grades in 2012, the proportion gaining A\* to C dropped.
- The proportion of students making expected progress from Key Stage 2 to GCSE has risen in the last three years: in English, from 44% to 63%, in mathematics, from 45% to 75%, which is now considerably better than the national average rate of progress.
- The school has chosen to enter most students early for GCSE in English and mathematics, and this has helped many students to gain confidence and achieve pass grades. All are offered opportunities to improve their grades, but for a small number of the most able students in mathematics, early achievement of a B or A grade has not motivated them to work for an A\*. The school has reviewed its policy on early entry for these students in 2013.
- Some older students, who have had less time to benefit from recent improvements in teaching, find it difficult to enjoy their learning. Inspectors observed a number of students who, despite encouragement and good teaching, were not working well.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well provided for and their attainment is improving fast. They are set ambitious targets and as a result they often rise well to the challenge.
- Progress rates in Key Stage 3 are impressive and improving. The effective work to increase reading skills, together with high aspirations and expectations for both staff and students are showing real impact.
- Students made good or better progress in just over half the lessons observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of students' work confirmed that over time, most students make good progress, with a number of examples of exceptional progress.
- Pupil premium funding, used to support students known to be eligible for free school meals or with other additional needs, funds additional teaching and support staff, including learning mentors and an attendance officer. Students eligible for the pupil premium have made better progress than most; the funding has had a positive impact.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- There is some excellent teaching in the school, where the learning is thoughtfully and carefully planned. Short but precise explanations and examples quickly allow students to get started on work that helps them to make rapid progress. In the best lessons, students are given a choice of the amount of support and level of challenge, so that none are held back by needless repetition or lack of understanding.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge is used well. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics class, very careful use of language helped students understand complex mathematical ideas and in a history lesson, it enriched a thoroughly enjoyable lesson about Roman baths. When they experience these lessons, students quickly become absorbed into their learning, and are

confident to explore ideas and deepen their understanding.

- Some teachers are highly skilled in setting challenging goals for learning, helping to lift the self-belief of students so that they are prepared to attempt the hardest work. At the end of an art lesson, for example, there was an enjoyable and uplifting celebration of learning, where students threw their targets in the bin once they had been achieved.
- In many lessons, however, teaching is not adventurous. It is structured to ensure progress towards examination targets. Opportunities to generate excitement and interest or to develop spiritual, moral, social or cultural elements are sometimes missed. Students mostly cooperate well with their teachers and can see how they benefit from the learning, but if the pace of the lesson slows, attention and behaviour can quickly deteriorate.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers are not sufficiently clear in planning exactly what needs to be learnt. When this happens, although students continue to make progress, it is much slower than it could be.
- Strategies to improve students' literacy skills are widely used across subjects. A consistent approach to using 'point, evidence, explain' (PEE) in most subjects is having an impact in helping students to write better, extended answers in exams.
- The quality of marking is variable. Nearly all books are regularly marked, and in some, there are lots of helpful comments to help students improve their work. In some, corrections and comments are too brief to be helpful and insufficient attention is paid to ensuring work is well presented.
- Although most lessons make some allowance for the different abilities and prior knowledge of students, this is often by the use of 'all, most, some' descriptions in the lesson objectives. This can discourage some students from aiming high. In better lessons observed, such as a Year 11 mathematics lesson, a very challenging target was set for all the students, and different levels of support were provided to help them all to work towards it.

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

- Most behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students and staff are able to describe many ways in which it has improved over the last two years. The school's behaviour policy is well supported and used by all teachers.
- Attendance has improved enormously. This was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection. The school's actions to improve attendance have been highly effective and attendance rates are now better than for most schools.
- Students describe few incidents of bullying and poor behaviour and are mostly confident in the school's ability to deal effectively with it.
- Those students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, are well supported by the school. Inspectors observed case studies where individuals had benefited greatly from the school's support.
- The school has good arrangements to ensure that students are kept safe. Checks are made on all staff before employment and care is taken to make sure that the school site is safe. Some students said that they thought the school could do more to prepare them to be safe outside of school, for example, through more education in sex and relationships.

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

- Inspectors found a clear and consistent view from everyone they spoke to, that the current headteacher has helped to bring about a dramatic improvement in the school. Members of staff, the local authority and the governing body all recognise the contribution that he has made. There is a very clear, shared vision for the future development of the school.
- The leadership has a very accurate picture of the strengths of the school, together with areas of development. The school development plan is concise and sharply focused on further improving

the outcomes for students, and on moving the school as quickly as possible to being outstanding in all respects.

- Systems to monitor and improve the quality of teaching are exemplary. All teachers have a personal development plan to improve their teaching. There are some good examples of where the training and development offered have brought about measurable improvements in the quality of learning.
- Middle leaders take a full share of responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- There are very effective links between the quality of teaching and the performance management of staff, including decisions about pay.
- There is a balanced and appropriate curriculum in the school, providing opportunities for students to improve their basic skills and choose from a good range of subjects. The curriculum is kept under constant review, and is modified in the light of evaluation and the needs of the students.
- The improvements generated by the leadership team in the last two years indicate that they have a good capacity to ensure the continued improvement of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good range of skills and expertise, and is well equipped to hold the school very effectively to account. Governors are able to analyse the school's achievement data and ask challenging questions. They have a good understanding of the way in which the pupil premium funding is spent and have also been involved in the evaluation of its impact. They have kept an appropriate level of oversight on the school's performance management arrangements, and have employed an external consultant to support their performance management of the headteacher. The governing body fulfils all its statutory functions well, including ensuring that the financial resources of the school are used effectively.

## 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>	106259
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	400836

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>	725
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Amyes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matt Jennings
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3386684
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