

# Norden High School and Sports College

Stourton Street, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 4ED

## Inspection dates

16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- While most students make the progress expected of them in Key Stages 3 and 4, not enough students make better progress than this. Achievement has improved in recent years but is not yet good.
- Although the proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding has improved since the previous inspection, too much teaching still requires improvement. It is not always challenging enough and too often fails to stimulate students' interest.
- While students feel safe in school and generally behave well around school, in too many lessons their attitudes to learning are not always positive enough; this slows the progress that some of them make.
- Leaders and managers do not set ambitious enough targets for students' progress and achievement. They do not check on the quality of teaching with enough rigour so it can improve at a faster rate.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students make good progress and generally achieve well in mathematics.
- The majority of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of armed forces personnel) make good progress because of the good support they receive.
- The school cares well for its students.
- Leaders and managers have a very clear view of how successful the school can be. School leaders show good determination in driving the school forwards. As a result, achievement and the quality of teaching are improving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons. One observation was carried out jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, three groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation summaries; the school improvement plan; information about students’ attainment, progress and achievement; policies and information relating to safeguarding, documentation on behaviour and attendance; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 14 parental responses on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), summaries of questionnaires sent to parents by the school and questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Additional Inspector

Gary Kelly

Additional Inspector

Fiona McNally

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Norden is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students who join the school at other than normal times is above average.
- The school meets the current government standards that set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- No students attend off-site provision.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2012 and the Chair of the Governing Body has been in post since March 2012.

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

- Raise achievement to good by improving the quality of teaching so that most is good or better by:
  - making sure that the tasks students are set are at the right level and are neither too hard nor too easy
  - ensuring that questioning in lessons always makes students think hard and that they are expected to explain their answers at length
  - making sure that all lessons are planned to have a sharp focus on the quality of students' learning and progress
  - improving the quality of marking so that it always makes clear to students what they need to do to improve their work.
- Ensure that all students have consistently positive attitudes to learning by:
  - involving them more actively in lessons
  - making sure that all teaching is lively, stimulating and challenging.
- Make leadership and management more effective in making the school better by:
  - checking on the quality of teaching with greater rigour and accuracy
  - setting more challenging targets for students' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students join the school with attainment that is generally below that of most schools across the country.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is below the national average although it is improving steadily. School information, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that attainment is set to rise at a faster pace than in the past because leaders and managers are taking effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The proportion of students attaining GCSE passes at grades A\* to C in mathematics has been higher than in English for the last two years because of disruption to staffing in the English department. The staffing situation has now settled down and school data show that attainment in English is rising securely.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. This allows the school to reorganise groups in Year 11 to provide a sharper focus on raising their grades further.
- By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, most students make the progress expected of them given their starting points on joining the school. However, not enough students make better progress than this in comparison to national figures, for achievement to be good.
- Leaders and managers have worked hard and successfully to refine and use effectively systems to check on students' progress and these systems are starting to bear fruit in raising achievement. However, leaders and managers accept that targets for students' progress should be more challenging if a greater proportion of students are to make better progress.
- The progress and achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is also improving steadily because provision to support their learning has been focused much more closely on their individual needs. In addition, their progress is checked more regularly and accurately. The few students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make the progress expected of them given their starting points. Students who join the school at other than normal times generally make the progress expected of them.
- Gaps in GCSE points scores between students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and other students both in school and nationally have been closed because these students receive strong support both in and outside the classroom. Funding is used successfully to make sure that they make progress in line with other students in the school and are fully included in all aspects of school life.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- School records of checks made on teaching, supported by evidence gathered during the inspection, show that its quality is improving steadily and that inadequate teaching has been eradicated. The proportion of teaching that is good or better has risen significantly. However, too much teaching still requires improvement and this acts as a brake on accelerating students' progress at a faster rate.
- Students say that the quality of teaching is inconsistent but that, overall, its quality is improving. They love it when 'lessons are fun' but say that some lessons are 'too dull'.
- Teaching that requires improvement is typified by: a lack of pace and excitement; setting activities in lessons that are not at the right level, which are either too easy or too hard; asking questions that do not stretch students' thinking or are too quickly and briefly answered by students; and planning that concentrates too much on what students are to do with too little reference to how the activities will have an impact on students' learning.
- The combined effect of these shortcomings is that students' progress slows in some lessons and reduces their levels of enjoyment and engagement in learning. As a result, where teaching

requires improvement, students are too passive and do not show attitudes to learning that are positive enough to drive forward their progress and achievement at a faster pace.

- Where teaching is good or outstanding, however, students enjoy rising to challenging work and are eager to give of their best. Lessons are conducted at a fast pace and with a good variety of activities that are matched closely to students' abilities and needs. For example, in one outstanding Year 8 mathematics lesson on symmetry, the teacher asked very searching questions that really made the class think deeply. Excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) grabbed students' attention throughout. Practical written exercises took students on a step-by-step voyage of understanding. 'Oh, I get it!' and 'Oh, I see!' were frequent exclamations from students as 'the pennies dropped'. Needless to say, progress was outstanding.
- Much teaching of mathematics is good and enables students to make good progress in most lessons. After a period of significant disruption, the teaching of English is improving and students' progress in writing and reading is improving securely.
- Most teachers mark students' written work regularly. However, there are weaknesses in the quality and usefulness of some comments in showing students what they need to do to improve their work. This also slows progress in some classes.

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

### **requires improvement**

- School records show that, over the last three years, recorded instances of poor behaviour and exclusions from school have fallen significantly, supporting students' claims that behaviour is getting better and that fewer lessons are now disrupted than previously. Parents do not express any significant concerns about behaviour in school. However, where teaching is dull and fails to stimulate students' interest or engage them actively in their learning, they sometimes react with lethargy and general disinterest. Occasionally, they react with low-level chatter and disruption.
- Students are generally courteous and welcoming. They treat adults and each other with respect. In many lessons they show positive attitudes to learning.
- Students say that bullying of any sort is rare and that it is dealt with promptly and effectively on the few occasions when it happens.
- Students say they feel safe in school. They understand what constitute potentially dangerous situations and how to avoid or deal with them. They understand fully the potential dangers presented by using internet sites.
- Students who are disabled are treated with unerring respect.
- The school has comprehensive procedures in place to check on absence and promotes the importance of regular attendance effectively. As a result, most students attend regularly and are punctual. However, many students who join the school at other than normal times do so with poor attendance records that continue despite the school's best efforts; this results in overall attendance levels that are below average.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- New leadership is bringing about steady, secure improvement. Leaders and managers know what the school does well and where it should be doing better. The school's plans for improvement have a sharp focus on the areas to be improved and provide a clear view on how successful the school can be.
- The rigour and regularity with which the quality of teaching is checked has been improved. However, too much teaching is judged as good or better when it is not, so the system does not provide a fully accurate picture of its overall quality and impact on students' learning and progress.
- Procedures for setting targets for students' progress have been sharpened and much more

effective use is being made of information from assessments to hold teachers to account for the progress of students in their classes as part of managing their performance. However, targets for progress and achievement are based on students' expected progress and are not high enough to drive achievement up at a faster pace.

- Leadership has issued a rallying call to staff to raise standards to which staff are responding positively. Teamwork in the pursuit of improvement is evident.
- The curriculum meets students' needs. It provides a broad range of appropriate courses and qualifications that equip students adequately for life and further study when they leave school. There is a wide range of popular enrichment activities that support students' personal development effectively.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has many strengths. Students are very clear about right and wrong and enjoy opportunities in assemblies and in personal, social and health education lessons to consider the ideas in different religions and diversity in their own society. By the time they leave school, most students are confident and mature young adults.
- The fact that all groups of students, regardless of background or ability, make similar progress testifies to the school's strong and successful commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school and would recommend it to other parents.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are firmly in place and give no cause for concern.
- The local authority is providing leadership and the governing body with strong support in driving up achievement and in reorganising the management structure of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The effectiveness of the governing body is improving rapidly. Under the recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body, the governors now have a much better understanding of the school, its data, how well it is doing and what it needs to do to become a good school. The governing body knows the quality of teaching and that too much requires improvement. It is strongly supporting and challenging the headteacher to bring about the necessary improvements through, for example, more rigorous use of performance management and closer scrutiny of any rewards to encourage good and better teaching. The governing body uses information about the performance of other similar schools both locally and nationally to set realistic and challenging benchmarks for improvement. Governors are supporting the headteacher strongly in revising the management structure of the school to head off a potential budget deficit. Governors take their professional development seriously and attend local authority training sessions to keep themselves up-to-date.

## 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>	119717
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401868

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>	609
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elaine Lockwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 885378
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