

# Philips High School

Higher Lane, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 7PH

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress and achieve well. Attainment in mathematics and English has been above average for several years, although there was small dip in mathematics in 2012.
- Effective systems of target-setting and checking promote good progress across all subjects.
- Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection.
- Students with a wide range of needs receive targeted support which enables them to achieve well. Students with low levels of literacy make good progress in reading. Physically disabled students and those with complex medical needs are well supported in the classroom and achieve well.
- The curriculum has been improved and is well suited to allow all students to be successful.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Most students are courteous, respectful and articulate.
- The care and support offered by the school are outstanding. As a result, students feel safe and have a very clear awareness of how to keep safe, including an understanding of rules for internet safety.
- Senior leaders have created a demanding, but supportive, professional climate in school. Staff morale is high and all staff respond positively to the high expectations set for their work.
- On the basis of regular reviews, members of the governing body, the headteacher, leaders and managers know exactly what steps to take to improve the school.
- The school works hard to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to be successful.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to take learning further and to give students more time to develop and explore new ideas.
- The quality of marking and feedback to students is inconsistent across subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons taught by 42 teachers. They also listened to students read.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at work in students' books, scrutinised information about how well students are doing, safeguarding information and other policies and documents.
- As there were not enough responses on Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, inspectors took account of the results of the school's most recent parental surveys.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Additional Inspector
Derek Davies	Additional Inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding provided for certain students, is well-above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion supported through school action is below average.
- A very small number of students attend courses at Bury College.
- The school has specialist status for mathematics and computing.
- The school is a designated centre for physically disabled students.
- The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, Sportsmark, the International Award and the Leading Parent Partnership Award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and thus raise achievement further by:
  - strengthening teachers' skills in questioning so that students think harder about their views and explanations and have more time to develop and explore new ideas
  - ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves and solve problems, and thus take more responsibility for their own learning
  - improving further the quality of marking so that students know more precisely how to improve their work and have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about their learning
  - sharing best practice so that all lessons actively engage, interest and inspire students
  - providing more opportunities for extended writing across different subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with average standards in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, standards in English are significantly above average and have been so for the last three years. Despite a dip in 2012, standards in mathematics are also above average. Students achieve particularly well in a range of subjects, including information and communication technology, art, graphics, performance studies, religious education and physical education.
- Students make rapid progress, particularly in English, where a very high proportion makes faster progress than is the case in many other schools. The school identified that average-attaining students were less successful in mathematics in 2012. These students have been entered early for GCSE in this academic year and the proportion who have already gained grade C or better is already above average. Inspection evidence shows that this figure is set to rise further when other students take the examination in June. The school has tackled previous underperformance in sciences by changing the courses offered so that a high percentage of students are now achieving two good passes at GCSE.
- Work in students' books and the progress they make in lessons confirm that students in all year groups are achieving well in a wide range of subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special education needs do as well as other students because of the sensitive and effective support they receive. The students themselves appreciate the various intervention methods which help them to make faster progress.
- The attainment and progress of the students who are supported through pupil premium funding was a little below that of other students in 2011 but the gap in their average points scores narrowed in 2012 in both English and mathematics. The school's tracking of progress shows that the gap is on track to narrow even further in the current academic year. The very small proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as a second language also make good progress.
- A very small number of students attend vocational courses in hairdressing and engineering at a nearby college. These students achieve well because the courses are well suited to their interests and talents.
- Standards in reading are high and many students take pleasure in reading aloud confidently and fluently. Lower attaining students were seen making especially good progress because of highly skilled teachers providing systematic, individual tuition.
- Students have been particularly successful in developing enterprise skills. Those who take part in the Young Enterprise scheme describe how it has increased their confidence and self-esteem and believe they have learned about the importance of managing money and effective time management. This is just one example of how effectively the school prepares students for future education, training or employment.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is at the root of students' good progress and achievement. In the best lessons, students are fully involved, often manage their own learning and make rapid progress. There are now examples of outstanding teaching in both key stages.
- Good relationships encourage students to participate actively and some work very well together in pairs and groups. Students especially enjoy practical lessons where they learn actively and find out things for themselves. However, these opportunities are not consistent across all classes.
- In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm inspire students to learn and achieve well.
- In the minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, the pace is too slow and activities are not sufficiently stimulating to motivate students to do their best. Teachers talk for too long so

that they lose the attention of students.

- In lessons where teaching is good, more could be done to improve teachers' questioning to take learning further and make students think more deeply about the topics they are studying. There are not always enough opportunities for students to explain what they have learned and so deepen understanding.
- The teaching of reading skills is particularly effective but there are not enough opportunities for extended writing in subjects other than English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the skilled support of teaching assistants and because work is well tailored to their specific needs.
- Assessment is well developed and contributes to the school's good tracking system. Teachers set increasingly challenging targets for individual students. However, day-to-day marking is inconsistent across subjects. Some marking is too brief and does not give students enough information about how to improve their work to the next level. There is rarely a dialogue between teacher and student in books so that the impact of feedback is limited.

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

- Students are able to express clearly and confidently how exceptionally safe they feel in school and in lessons. They demonstrate very high levels of respect for adults and peers and are especially thoughtful in their behaviour towards visitors and disabled students.
- Students are crystal clear that bullying is not tolerated and students spoken to agree that there are numerous adults they could trust to help if they or a friend were being bullied. Students say that there is little or no name-calling or incidents of racism, homophobic bullying or examples of cyber-bullying. Students are fully aware of how mobile telephones and the internet can be used to intimidate and bully and know that this behaviour is cowardly and hurtful.
- Students' behaviour for learning is excellent. Lessons are rarely disrupted in any way and, in the majority of lessons, students concentrate, work hard, listen attentively and are keen to be successful. Exclusions have reduced significantly in recent years.
- Attendance has risen each year for the last four years and is now above average. The number of students who are persistently absent has decreased. Students are punctual to lessons. The attendance of students receiving pupil premium support has increased considerably as a result of effective action taken by the school.
- The great majority of parents responding to recent questionnaires are very confident that their children are safe and that good behaviour is the norm.

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

- Good leadership and management from the headteacher and the four assistant headteachers, with good support from the governing body, have led to significant improvements in teaching, the curriculum and the achievement of students.
- Senior leaders are thoughtful, analytical and have the loyalty and support of staff and students. The success of their actions is seen in the strong improvement in the school since the last inspection.
- Underachievement in mathematics has been overcome by having more stable staffing and improving aspects of teaching, including a stronger focus on the skills to be taught. Lower attainment in science has been successfully reversed so that students now achieve well.
- Early entry for GCSE subjects is used wisely only when it is likely to increase the achievement of students. Leaders recognise that most students, including higher-attaining students, need time to reach their full potential and that early entry to GCSE does not always result in students achieving the best grade of which they are capable.
- Both the college and school leaders carefully check on the attendance, progress and

achievement of the small number of students who attend vocational courses for part of the week at Bury College to make sure they have the same opportunities to be as successful as others.

- The leadership of teaching and learning has resulted in a far higher proportion of teaching which is good, and some which is outstanding, since the previous inspection.
- Staff performance is managed effectively. Staff skills are improved by regular training in aspects such as accurately checking on students' progress and setting more challenging targets. The school's tracking system is more effective in identifying underachievement early and encouraging teachers to set more challenging targets. Subject leaders are all involved in checking on the quality of work in their departments and ensuring high standards.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent effectively and has improved the attendance, progress and achievement of students. As a result of the school's investment, the attendance of these students has increased significantly and the gap between their average points score for GCSE passes has narrowed considerably over the past two years.
- The curriculum has been broadened to ensure that students of all abilities have the opportunity to be successful on courses which are right for them. This contributes to rising attendance, student motivation and achievement. The school puts strong emphasis on the importance of reading and life skills. The positive atmosphere in school and the wide range of international links with countries such as Ghana, Kenya, China and Japan ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered effectively.
- The local authority provides effective support for improvement across a range of subjects including English and mathematics. The governing body has benefitted significantly from the wide range of training courses put on by the local authority.
- Systems for safeguarding students are rigorous and ensure that students are safe in school.
- Parents have high regard for the school and are well informed about their children's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a wide range of expertise and supports and challenges the school very effectively. Governors know the school well through personal visits and frequent contact with the school. Governors are involved in all aspects of management and ensure that salary progression of staff is linked to improved performance and that pupil premium funding is spent to the best effect to support the students for whom it is intended. The governing body understands how to interpret the data on students' progress and achievement and holds the school to account where there is any under-performance. Governors have a good link with parents and are involved in checking on attendance, behaviour and safety, and students' 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105360
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	404987

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>	854
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Lockwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Trees
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 351 2200
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