

Irlam and Cadishead College

Station Road, Irlam, Manchester, M44 5ZR

Inspection dates

10–11 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Students' achievement in English is improving but their progress in mathematics is too slow. Not enough students make good progress in science.
- Teaching requires improvement, particularly in mathematics. Students make slow progress because lessons often lack pace. Students are allowed to take too long to complete activities.
- Teaching does not always meet the needs of all students; at times the work is too easy for some and too hard for others.
- A few lessons are interrupted by poor behaviour because a minority of students do not have positive attitudes to learning.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching have not focused sharply enough on the progress that students are making in lessons.
- Senior leaders do not always provide the governing body with specific information on how the school's work is making a difference to students' progress. As a result, the school is not improving at a fast enough rate.
- The governing body requires improvement because its level of challenge of senior leaders is not as good as it should be.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' overall attainment is improving. Students achieve well in vocational subjects at GCSE level. Students' progress on BTEC courses is also good.
- Attendance rates have improved as a result of the good care and support provided by school leaders. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the needs of students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in history, textiles and physical education.
- The sixth form is good. Students enjoy their learning because they are well taught. The good support and advice they receive prepare them well for their next steps.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, the vice-chair and other members of the governing body, groups of students and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 29 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire. They analysed the results of the staff questionnaire to which 13 replies were received.
- Inspectors analysed the 2012 examination results and the published results for previous years. They looked at the school's data on students' progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the school's checks on how well it is doing and improvement plans.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Woodhouse

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized comprehensive, with a sixth form.
- The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those from service families and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership with a range of businesses and organisations, including TalkTalk Technology and the Manchester United Foundation, to offer a broad range of courses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' planning to ensure that enough activities keep students actively engaged for the entire duration of 100-minute lessons
 - making sure that students are required to work at a good pace in all lessons
 - using information about students' progress to make sure work is at the right level of difficulty for all abilities within the class
 - ensuring that all teachers apply the school's behaviour management policy so that learning is not affected by poor behaviour.
- Raise achievement in mathematics and science to match that in the best subjects by:
 - sharing the existing good practice that exists within the school to establish much better teaching
 - making sure students understand new concepts and how they can practically apply their learning in mathematics to real-life situations.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, at all levels by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is checked by working with more experts from other schools
 - making sure that improvement plans are sharply focused on improving students' progress with specific and measurable targets so that all aspects of the school's work can be checked more easily
 - ensuring that lesson observations and feedback to teachers focus on students' learning and progress
 - making sure that governors receive the specific information they need about students' progress in order to hold school leaders effectively to account for all aspects of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because students are not making fast enough progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Students now enter the school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics which are in line with those expected nationally. However, students currently in Years 10 and 11 joined the school with below-average attainment.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more A*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is rising but remains below average. Girls achieve better than boys.
- In English the number of students making expected progress has improved and is now average. In 2012 students' attainment in GCSE English literature was significantly above the national average. Students do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English because teaching is much weaker.
- In the past students have been entered early for GCSE mathematics. This strategy has been reviewed and modified because students have been prevented from achieving as well as they should. The school's projections indicate that achievement in mathematics in 2013 will match national expectations for pupils' progress.
- In science students achieve well in separate GCSE courses in biology, chemistry and physics. However, other students who take the double science option do not make enough progress.
- Across the range of subjects students achieve results in line with national averages. Students' progress on BTEC courses is good and attainment in several vocational GCSE qualifications is significantly better than average.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by a statement make particularly good progress because of the good support they receive from teaching assistants.
- Students identified as requiring school action and school action plus did not achieve well last year. Many have behavioural, emotional and social needs and these students are now supported by a counsellor three days per week. Current data indicate that this year these students are on track to make much better progress.
- Additional pupil premium funding is used by the school to provide mentoring and counselling for students from less well-off backgrounds and financial support so they can attend school visits. An additional teacher in mathematics supports their numeracy development. The overall gap between the achievement of these students and that of others has narrowed marginally but they are still over half a grade behind their peers in both English and mathematics.
- 'Year 7 catch-up' funding aims to improve students' literacy through increased speech and language intervention. Over half of the students receiving extra phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) support have improved their skills and made good progress by completing the programme.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students make good progress from low starting points on a variety of mainly vocational courses which are well suited to their needs and aspirations. As a result, over a third of sixth-formers go on to higher education. Every other student goes on to either further education or employment with training.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because not enough lessons are good or better and there is a small minority of inadequate teaching.
- Learning does not always get off to a brisk start because teachers talk for too long and so some students make slow progress. Not all teachers have sufficient strategies to speed up the pace of lessons, particularly in mathematics. Students are not encouraged to complete tasks quickly and teachers do not always plan enough activities to keep students totally engaged during 100-

minute lessons. In mathematics teaching does not fully support students' understanding of new mathematical concepts so that students find it difficult to build upon gains in their knowledge.

- In a minority of lessons students display negative attitudes to learning. This is often as a result of teaching which is dull and unimaginative, but this is not always the case.
- Teachers' planning does not take into account the full range of abilities. Too often all students are provided with the same work. As a result, some students are not challenged enough whereas others find the work too difficult.
- In the lessons where students make the most rapid progress, teachers have high expectations and plan a variety of activities which engage students and develop their wider skills. For example, in an outstanding Year 10 history lesson the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and variety of resources enabled students to effectively develop their literacy skills through activities which gave them practice in note-taking and summary writing. As a result, students made outstanding progress in their understanding of how the National Health Service developed.
- Students make most progress in practical and work-related subjects when they are actively engaged in their learning and understand its relevance to real life. For instance, all students in a Year 9 catering lesson were observed enthusiastically engaged in their task of making bread.
- Teaching in physical education is consistently good or better.
- In the sixth form teaching is characterised by a positive working atmosphere and strong relationships.
- Marking is good across the range of subjects. Students receive regular feedback on what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because in a few lessons students' learning is interrupted by the poor behaviour of a small minority.
- Attendance is now close to the national average. This is an improvement compared to recent years. Persistent absence is below average. Arrangements for the safety of students are secure and parents agree their child is safe at school.
- Students say that in some lessons, particularly in mathematics, not all teachers manage behaviour well and there is inconsistency in teachers' use of the school's behaviour policy. Students feel that not all of their peers take enough responsibility for their learning and behaviour in lessons.
- Around the building students show respect for the school environment and behave well. The school's house system, involving students from each year group, contributes to this good behaviour by developing good relations between students of different ages.
- Inspectors observed high standards of behaviour in a house assembly on the theme of change which celebrated students' achievements and successes.
- House periods are used to improve some students' literacy and numeracy skills, although this time is not used as effectively as it could be because students in all year groups complete the same tasks.
- Students are aware of the different forms of bullying because the school develops their understanding of homophobic and cyber-bullying well. As a result, older students say that bullying is not a problem. However, younger students express frustration that they do not always know how the school resolves the few instances of bullying which arise at Key Stage 3.
- Opportunities for all students to develop their leadership skills are limited. Few students are aware of the work of the school council because it does not have a high enough profile.
- Senior leaders are strongly committed to providing support for individual students who face challenging circumstances. Close working with different agencies and the effective use of teaching assistants ensure improvements in the behaviour of these students, although there is not enough analysis of how these initiatives are making a difference to students' achievement.

- Attendance in the sixth form is good because students enjoy their learning.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because students' achievement, particularly in mathematics, teaching and behaviour are not yet good enough.
- Senior leaders demonstrate that they are improving the school because attainment is rising over time, attendance has improved and the school development plan covers the important areas that are holding the school back. However, leaders' assessment of the school's overall effectiveness is too generous. Leaders at all levels are not systematically evaluating the impact of all aspects of the school's work on students' progress. Although staffing difficulties have not helped, senior leaders have been too slow to tackle students' underperformance in mathematics.
- Senior leaders have not been afraid to challenge teachers' underperformance. Teachers' pay progression has been based on successfully meeting performance management targets which link to Teachers' Standards. As a result, senior leaders have been successful in eradicating most, but not all, inadequate teaching.
- Specific training programmes are in place to improve the performance of subject leaders and to help teachers move from good to outstanding. Not enough evaluation has taken place of the school's success in improving the skills of teachers who require improvement.
- Joint lesson observations undertaken during the inspection indicate senior leaders' judgements of teaching are generally accurate. However, the monitoring of the quality of teaching does not fully take into account the impact teaching has on students' progress.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of teachers' work are well established because both senior and subject leaders take an active role in observing lessons and sampling students' work. As a result, teachers' marking across the range of subjects is generally good.
- Data on students' achievement are collected regularly and analysed by senior and subject leaders. However, the progress of individual students is not tracked closely enough and data are not analysed sufficiently rigorously. This means that action is not always taken quickly enough to result in the consistently good practice required to secure good achievement for all students.
- Leaders' improvement plans at all levels do not identify sufficient measurable outcomes; therefore, their evaluation of success is too general.
- The local authority has contributed to recent small improvements in students' achievement in mathematics by providing additional support.
- External support is not often used to validate senior leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The curriculum is well designed and closely matches students' needs and aspirations. The students in Year 7 whose circumstances make them most vulnerable receive targeted support which secures good outcomes in terms of their personal development. Older students talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of their options subjects.
- A new course in psychology contributes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Extra-curricular provision for sport is strong. Students are developing their understanding of communities which are very different from their own through a well-established link with a school in the Gambia.
- Leadership of the sixth form has ensured students' good achievement by offering students high-quality advice about their futures; this guides their learning and progress. Good links with local businesses and other providers enable the school to offer a wide range of courses in the sixth form.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - An external audit of the governing body is not recommended despite the school requiring improvement. This is because governors bring a range of valuable experience and skills in education and business to the school and undertake appropriate training. The governing body

understands the school's strengths and weaknesses because it has a sound understanding of published data on the school's performance. Governors acknowledge they could increase the level of challenge they provide if they received more detailed information about the impact of all aspects of the school's work and extra spending on students' progress. Governors understand the school's arrangements for the management of teachers' work and the link between good teaching and salary progression. The governing body ensures that arrangements for keeping students safe are secure, including when they are attending off-site provision.

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	105976
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	412793

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,014
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Fairclough
Headteacher	John Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2009
Telephone number	0161 921 2100
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