

Manningtree High School

Colchester Road, Lawford, Manningtree, CO11 2BW

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good 2
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

- Not enough students make good progress from their above-average starting points, especially in English.
- There are too many classes where teaching is not yet good enough.
- Teachers do not always match the work set to students' abilities. This means that some students do not make good enough progress.
- In too many classes, teaching lacks inspiration, questioning is not used effectively and students are not given enough opportunities to think for themselves.
- Marking is not always sufficiently detailed. As a result, students do not all know what they need to do to improve.
- Actions taken by senior leaders since the school became an academy have not yet had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Some subjects are not led as effectively as others.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders are taking action to tackle underachievement.
- Many students are involved in community events and, through their annual Charity Week, raise significant amounts of money for a range of good causes, both local and global.
- Standards are improving in many subjects.
- Students' behaviour is good. They feel safe in the school. Students are polite to staff and they treat each other with respect.
- Governors hold the school to account and they are taking robust action to address weaknesses.
- Students for whom the school receives extra funding make good progress so that they are catching up with other groups of students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, of which five were seen together with senior staff. Inspectors also observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and students' achievement in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, heads of subjects, a group of less experienced teachers and four groups of students. Inspectors also spoke with a small number of parents.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; the analysis of students' progress; records of classroom observations conducted by school leaders; students' work; and records relating to the behaviour and safety of students.
- Inspectors looked at the 64 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at the 40 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Neil Stanley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Wiles

Additional Inspector

Beverly Dobson

Additional Inspector

Heather Housden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average-sized.
- Most students are White British. A small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Manningtree High School converted to become an academy on 31 March 2012. When its predecessor school, which had the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is part of the North East Essex Educational Partnership.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This additional funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care, and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- No students are currently educated on other sites.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for achievement and progress at the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by making sure that all teachers:
 - plan and set work that is at the right level for all students
 - use questioning that checks understanding and helps involve students more in their learning
 - find opportunities for students to work more independently
 - engage the interest of all students, particularly boys, so that they keep their concentration in lessons
 - use marking consistently to show students how they can improve, and give students regular opportunities to respond to the comments and learn from them
- Raise the attainment and progress of all students across the school, and particularly in English, so that standards in all subjects are well above average by using the systems for tracking pupil progress effectively so that students at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and extra help is put in place.
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management and its impact on school improvement by ensuring that:
 - support is given to subject areas where students' progress could be better
 - the school's policies on marking and assessment are applied consistently
 - good teaching practice is spread consistently across the school
 - standards of subject leadership are consistently good.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards are not consistently high enough in all subjects to demonstrate good progress. Students start at the school with above-average attainment, but not enough students reach the higher grades at GCSE. Although the school's tracking of current progress shows improvement, inconsistent teaching means that not enough students are making better than expected progress.
- The percentage of students who gain five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics is below average, although results in humanities subjects are good. Attainment in mathematics has improved, but progress in English is not yet good enough and the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress from their starting points is below that found nationally. School data indicates significant improvements over the last 12 months, particularly in English, with progress expected to be at least in line with national expectations. However, this remains to be tested through examination success.
- In terms of their overall points score (the measure by which all students are assessed nationally at the end of each stage of their education), students make good progress when GCSE subjects only are considered and less than expected progress when all equivalent qualifications are counted. This is because the school provides a curriculum that is primarily based on GCSEs. The percentage gaining higher A* and A passes was average.
- No students are entered early for English examinations. School data show that a higher proportion of current students are on track to gain improved results in English, and so make better progress than in 2012.
- The newly introduced programme to improve reading levels, which is funded by the catch-up premium, has led to improved reading ages for Year 7 students.
- Progress by disabled students and those who have special educational needs is in line with similar students nationally in mathematics but below in English. There are examples of effective support from adults that helps these students to take a full part in lessons.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress compared to their peers and similar students nationally. Money is allocated for additional one-to-one tutoring, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, gaps between these students and others are closing, although these students are typically one GCSE grade lower than other students in the school.
- Recently developed systems for tracking students' progress and the support provided for underachieving students are leading to improved progress for many students. However, these systems have not been in place long enough to demonstrate good progress over time.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Twenty per cent of the lessons seen were in English. A significant proportion of these required improvement. This explains why students' progress in English is not good enough.
- Sometimes, teachers talk for too long at the students and do not give them sufficient time to explore the topic or explain their thinking. This means some students, particularly boys, lose

motivation and, as a result, do not make as much progress as they should. When lessons are exciting and challenging, students show they can work very well in groups or independently. For example, in a food studies lesson, students said they found the work very difficult but also very enjoyable. Students like being able to take responsibility for their own learning.

- Some good questioning was seen that enabled teachers to accurately check on students' progress, but this is not a consistent feature of teaching across the school. Teachers do not always use questioning to fully involve and challenge all students to think about their work and develop their explanations.
- Although there have been improvements this year in the systems for tracking students' progress, the information from this progress tracking is not used in all subjects to quickly identify those at risk of underachieving so that prompt support can be provided.
- Most teachers assess students' work regularly and accurately, but this approach is inconsistent across the school. Much marking is good and provides constructive feedback. However, students are only just learning how to respond effectively to the marking and they are not always given clear opportunities to show they have made improvements as a result of teachers' comments.
- In the best lessons observed, there was thorough planning. Tasks were matched effectively to students' learning needs. In a geography lesson, for example, students were able to choose from a range of activities. They said they liked the opportunity to challenge themselves by selecting more challenging tasks and it was good to see them playing their part in ensuring good progress was made. However, in too many lessons, teachers did not set work that was at the right level for all the students.
- In some lessons, there is good evidence of students being supported well in the development of their literacy and numeracy. A French lesson on pocket money, for example, gave students the chance to apply their mathematics skills. However, this was not always the case and opportunities were often missed for students to apply their key skills.
- When students are given the opportunity to comment on each other's work, they do so thoughtfully and respectfully. For example, in a drama lesson, weaker students were able to support each other. As a result, they were becoming increasingly confident and making outstanding progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons is good. The school has a clear approach to managing behaviour and students say they understand its expectations of them.
 - Behaviour around the school site is good. Students are courteous and respectful to adults and to each other. They move calmly and quickly to lessons.
 - Students say they feel safe in school and they know how to keep themselves safe.
 - Relationships throughout the school are good. Students treat each other well. They work sensibly in small groups and encourage each other to do better. As a result, they feel confident about answering challenging questions and support each other to learn from their mistakes.
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- Students have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including racism, homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying. They say that bullying happens very rarely and is dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is above average, although it has fallen back slightly this year. The school is taking effective action to reduce levels of persistent absence.
- Students say they are happy and feel valued as individuals. They say the school's relatively small size makes it a closely-knit community.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show an informed understanding of their local community and of national and global issues, with a broad understanding of the wider world. Students' enthusiasm for the annual Charities Week and their exceptionally high levels of participation in raising money for good causes shows how selflessly they think about the lives of others and how they wish to improve the world.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because their work relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet had sufficient impact in ensuring that students make good progress overall, and particularly in English.
 - Senior leaders have responded to the 2012 GCSE results by introducing a range of new policies and procedures. However, some of these, for example, teachers' marking and assessment, have not been adopted consistently across the school. Insufficient steps were taken to foresee and prevent poor examination performance in 2012.
 - During the joint lesson observations, the senior leadership team assessed accurately overall the quality of teaching and learning, including lessons where this required improvement. Senior staff know the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve.
 - The headteacher and senior leadership team are now providing strong leadership and are working closely with governors to address areas of underachievement. Although the proportion of teaching that is good or better has improved this year, there is still too much teaching that is not yet good.
 - The senior leadership team has taken steps to strengthen subject leadership with new subject leaders in English and mathematics for September 2013. Where subjects are led well, for example, in the humanities subjects, there is consistently good teaching and students are making consistently good progress. However, as some new appointees have yet to join the school, the effectiveness of subject leadership varies. This means that the quality of teaching is variable and school policies are not applied consistently. As a result, students are making less progress.
 - Systems and processes for safeguarding students fully meet the current regulatory requirements. Students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are given good support and effective guidance. The level of care provided for students is good.
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- The performance of staff is well managed. The school has a fair approach to awarding pay rises and promotion for staff that is linked appropriately to students' achievement. Support is provided via the North East Essex Educational Partnership for teachers to develop their skills. However, there is not enough sharing of good practice. As a result, although the quality of teaching has improved over the past year, inconsistencies remain.

- The range of subjects taught is organised well to take account of students' different learning needs. The school currently offers a primarily GCSE-based Key Stage 4 curriculum, but has plans to offer a greater variety of vocational qualifications to better meet the needs of particular groups of pupils.

- The new Year 7 literacy programme is leading to improvements in students' reading ages.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Following changes to the governing body in January 2013, the school now has a Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, who bring valuable expertise. Under their leadership, the governing body provides good challenge for the school's leaders through close checks on progress, attendance data, behaviour reviews and regular visits, including a Governors' Week, where governors spend time in the school gathering information about teaching, learning and behaviour. As a result, governors have an accurate understanding of standards and the quality of teaching throughout the school. Governors endorse leaders' actions to tackle underperformance and they insist that pay and promotion are tied to the progress students make. Governors challenge how money is spent and they have a good understanding of how pupil premium money is being used to improve the achievement of eligible students. Governors ensure that the procedures for safeguarding, including procedures for the appointment of staff and ensuring the safety of students, meet national requirements.
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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

Unique reference number	137945
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412739

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	830
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Finney-Hewitson
Headteacher	Deborah Hollister
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01206 392852
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