

Southlands High School

Clover Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 2NJ

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Students make good progress overall as a result of consistently good teaching, which has continued to improve since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of students achieving national averages has increased over time, and increased significantly in 2012. Students who fell behind are well supported so they can catch up with their learning.
- Leaders and governors took immediate steps to improve the low results in science and languages in 2012 and as a result, progress and attainment in these subjects is improving.
- Leaders and governors have taken steps to improve the performance of groups of students who were achieving at a lower level than the majority of students in the school.
- Students behave well in lessons and around school. They support each other well in classroom activities so all students can learn and the vast majority show respect to visitors and adults when moving around the school.
- Students develop confidence and independence as a result of the responsibilities and opportunities offered to them, so they are well prepared for the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that students make outstanding progress.
- A proportion of boys and those of higher ability do not make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in English.
- Some teachers do not plan lessons to build on what students already know and as a result, students repeat work and do not progress as quickly as they could.
- Not all subject leaders check that teaching is good enough to help all students make good and better progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 staff teach 37 parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly by inspectors and the headteacher and a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a range of senior and other leaders, with the Chair and the vice-chair of the Governing Body, with students from each year group and the school's local authority adviser.
- The team looked at a range of documents written by the school including its own view of its performance and the quality of its provision, plans for future improvement, records of meetings, information on students' attainment and progress, records relating to behaviour, attendance and the curriculum and policies relating to the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors took account of 28 parents' views expressed in the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Geraldine Hutchinson	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Rothery	Additional Inspector
Derek Davies	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Southlands High School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after, has increased during the last two years and is now slightly above that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is lower than the proportion found nationally. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school makes arrangements for a number of students in Key Stage 3 to receive some of their education away from the school site at Shaftesbury House, the Alternative and Complimentary Referral Service and the Royal Northern Ballet School. A group of students in Key Stage 4 follow a hairdressing course at Wigan and Leigh College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has received a number of awards in recent years including the Sports Mark, Leading Edge status, Investors in People, the Personal Finance Education Group Quality Mark, the House of Commons Speaker's Award and is a Youth Support Trust Lead Partner School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to accelerate the progress of students by:
 - ensuring teachers plan activities which are carefully matched to students' needs so all students make the progress of which they are capable, particularly those of higher ability and those students who are more difficult to involve in their learning
 - using knowledge of what students have already learned to plan teaching and homework which extends their learning further.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by spreading the good practice in English and mathematics to all subjects, particularly in measuring the progress that students make and in improving the quality of lessons, so teaching meets the needs of all students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment has improved over time and it improved significantly in 2012 to above the national average. This represents good achievement from their average starting points. Students currently in Year 11 are set to reach or exceed these standards.
- Younger students make good progress in literacy because the school provides extra lessons for individuals and small groups of students who need to improve their reading skills. Any additional time available is used exceptionally well for Year 7 students to improve their performance in English before they move up to the next year group. In many lessons, students work in groups or pairs to discuss and give examples, or explain what they have learned, so they develop their communication skills and understanding.
- The school does not enter students for GCSE examinations until their final year in school and when the school is confident they can reach the highest standards.
- The school has increased the support given to improve the progress and attainment of boys and of those students supported by pupil premium funding. As a result, students supported by pupil premium funding have successfully narrowed, but not yet closed, the gap between their progress and attainment and that of the main body of students in the school.
- The progress and attainment of boys has begun to improve but they are not yet making sufficient progress to match the standards of most students in the school, particularly in English. The school's determination to continue to increase students' progress so all reach the highest standards is clear evidence of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Current students, who are eligible for pupil premium funding, are achieving grades half a grade lower than other students in the school and this gap is smaller than in 2012.
- The use of pupil premium funding is carefully recorded and is used effectively to provide additional teaching and time to discuss with students about their progress, so they understand what they need to learn and how they can improve their skills and understanding. It is also used well to provide any personal support to ensure they are settled and able to learn.
- The small numbers of students who follow courses away from the school site make good progress. The school selects the provision students attend very carefully so it meets their personal talents and interests, as well as providing them with courses where they can succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching helps most students to make good progress. A small proportion of teaching is outstanding. Teaching has improved steadily over time.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very good and teachers know students well. As a result, students have confidence that teachers will help them if they are stuck or do not fully understand the lesson.
- Teachers expect students to work hard and they plan activities so students practise remembering and understanding technical vocabulary so they can answer questions fully and explain what they have learned with confidence. In a Year 7 English lesson, students who needed extra practise in understanding description were questioned carefully about who was responsible for the death of the cat in a poem. One student changed his mind when he was helped by another student's answer to remember additional events. The teacher had planned activities so that students could find out more for themselves about how the writer had used description to make them feel sympathy for the main character. As a result, students became more independent in their learning.
- Teachers provide additional tasks for students who work more slowly so they understand what they are working on and what they have to do, and some teachers provide more complex work for students who are ready to apply their understanding to wider situations. However, in some lessons, students completed tasks that merely recapped learning they had already mastered so

their progress slowed.

- Lessons are purposeful and students know where they are succeeding and what they need to do to reach the next stage in their learning. Many students are involved engaged in the topics they are studying but the interest of boys in their learning and their enthusiasm to find out more is not always harnessed and as a result, they do not always make good progress.
- Teachers plan activities to make sure students can read, spell and understand key subject terminology. In a geography lesson, students were given a selection of words used in the subject where some had been misspelled. Students had to explain the meanings of the words to a partner and correct the errors. One student explained 'it helps you to really look at the words'.
- Students' work in the majority of subjects is marked regularly and key pieces of writing are assessed in detail. Students know their targets and they find teachers' comments on their work helpful in indicating what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of students behave very well in lessons and around school, and are polite and helpful to adults and visitors.
- They say they feel safe in and outside school and this is confirmed by parents and staff. Students talk confidently about how the school helps them to manage situations with their friends and how to avoid risky behaviour. They know how the internet can be misused and know not to share personal details on social networks and mobile phones. This supports their social and moral development effectively.
- Students know how bullying can take different forms and support and work with each other very well in lessons. They say they would not hesitate to turn to a member of staff if they or their friends were being bullied or if they were worried or upset.
- They take part in a wide range of events, several of which involve visits to schools in other countries and students have a good understanding of the different lives teenagers have in schools in other parts of the world. They enjoy the sport, art and drama activities after school and are able to develop their interests and talents through this provision. They discuss complex moral dilemmas that occur in literature and relate these to real life, such as when reading a poem about a young child left alone, exploring who is responsible for the child's behaviour in these circumstances. Students and staff have raised substantial funds for a number of charities, for a school in the Gambia, and for medical equipment for the British Heart Foundation. Students prepare supplies for elderly people in the community at Christmas. These many activities develop their spiritual and cultural understanding well.
- The majority of students attend well and are punctual to lessons. The school has taken effective steps to reduce the absence of girls and of students supported by pupil premium funding, who now attend more regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the leadership team, well supported by governors, have been effective in improving teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching is good with a small proportion that is outstanding.
- Senior leaders have made significant improvements in the accuracy and regularity of checks on students' progress and as a result, have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. This evaluation forms the basis of increasingly detailed plans to continue to raise the standards that students reach and to improve their rates of progress. This provides good evidence that leaders, managers and governors have the capacity to sustain improvement.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics effectively evaluate the quality of teaching in their subject and to improve the progress of individuals and groups of students. Not all subject leaders are checking the quality of teaching in their subject effectively.

- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the vast majority agree they would recommend the school to others. They also agree that their child is safe and well cared for in school.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students well and improvements have been made in selection of students for science courses so all have a chance to achieve high standards. Those who follow courses away from the school site make good progress and both boys and girls are equally able to develop their skills in a wide range of courses, including motor vehicle maintenance and hair and beauty therapy.
- All senior and subject leaders, and the governing body, are clear about the teachers' targets and how supporting students' progress and attainment leads to promotion and recognition through additional awards. The impact of strategies introduced by the school to improve teaching can be seen clearly in lessons when students work together to recap, reflect on and practise what they have learned.
- There was an unexpected gap in leadership of the languages department in 2012 and students' progress was not checked effectively. As a result, some students fell behind in their learning. There is now a new leader for languages and progress in lessons is improving. The curriculum and examinations in science in 2012 did not support students to make good progress. Leaders took steps to ensure that courses are better matched to students' abilities and students are now making much improved progress as measured by assessments and in lessons.
- The school's local authority partner knows the school well and has successfully challenged leaders to continue to improve the attainment and progress of all students, particularly those groups and individuals who were achieving less well than the majority.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and meet statutory requirements. The school takes reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students when attending off-site.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors subjected themselves to a review of their effectiveness early in 2013 and took steps to improve the types of decisions they were making. They now debate and decide on actions that influence the longer-term development of the school, rather than on actions that are carried out daily or weekly. They have learned more about how the school checks on students' progress and how students' attainment compares with the attainment of students nationally. They know what areas of teaching need to improve further and attend evaluation meetings of subject and senior leaders so they know what actions have been successful and what needs to change. They are keen that pupil premium funding is used to provide a variety of support for students and scrutinise information about students' progress to make sure that their progress improves even further.

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	119738
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	412794

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	754
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Frost
Headteacher	Mark Fowle
Date of previous school inspection	26 May 2010
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