

Matthew Moss High School

Matthew Moss Lane, Marland, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL11 3LU

Inspection dates 25–26 September 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 do not make consistently good progress in all subjects. Attainment in mathematics and some science courses is too low.
- Although teaching is good in some subjects, work is not always pitched at the right level. As a result, more-able students are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Students do not receive the support they need to develop their reading, writing and number skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been too high in the past but the new behaviour policy is already making a difference.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve less well than other students.
- Leaders at all levels have not focused closely enough on the priority areas which are impeding the school's improvement and holding it back.
- The governing body does not hold school leaders to account well enough for the quality of students' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students who achieve five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is good.
- Some groups, including those who speak English as an additional language and deaf students, achieve well.
- Above average numbers achieve the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc).
- The new headteacher has made a good start.
- Leaders' approach to developing 'mindfulness' is having a positive effect on students' well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's creative approaches to teaching are recognised both nationally and internationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of students and a representative of the governing body, and spoke with the local authority School Improvement Officer and representatives from further and higher education establishments that support the school's work.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 27 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They analysed the results of the staff questionnaire to which 61 replies were received.
- Inspectors 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 the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Additional Inspector
Dr Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Dr Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of students are from White British and Pakistani backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school hosts local authority provision for eight deaf students.
- At the time of inspection, the new headteacher had been in post for three weeks.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raising achievement by improving the quality of teaching to at least consistently good across all subjects by:
 - using information about students' progress to make sure that work is at the right level of difficulty for all abilities within the class, particularly the more-able and students eligible for the pupil premium
 - ensuring that students are given constructive feedback on how to improve their work
 - setting challenging targets that are understood and used by students to aspire to higher levels
 - ensuring there are opportunities in lessons across all subject areas to develop students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that improvement plans are sharply focused on improving students' progress with specific and measurable targets so that leaders at all levels are targeting the areas of the school's performance which are holding students back
 - ensuring observations of teaching focus closely on the extent to which teaching impacts on the progress made by students
 - monitoring the achievement of all student groups at both key stages, in particular students eligible for the pupil premium and the more-able, in order to take targeted action where necessary to ensure all students make at least good progress
 - ensuring that strategies significantly improve attainment in mathematics and science
 - conducting an external review of the governing body to ensure that governors are equipped to challenge school leaders effectively about students' achievement and their rates of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because students do not make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Students' achievement in mathematics is improving but it is not yet as good as in English and not enough students are making good progress. Their attainment on some GCSE courses, including mathematics and some science courses is significantly below average.
- Year 11 students are entered for their GCSE mathematics examination in November. This is adding to the proportion of grade Cs attained.
- Across the range of subjects students achieve below average numbers of A and A* grades because some more-able students do not attain the higher grades they should.
- Opportunities for students to develop their skills in reading, writing and number across the range of subjects are too limited.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve less well than other students in the school. Current data indicate that the gaps in attainment between these students and their peers are narrowing. For example, students in Year 11 are now around half a grade behind in English and mathematics.
- Some other student groups are performing well. For example, deaf students supported by specialist provision make good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that expected nationally.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are making good progress across the range of subjects.
- The proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is good because students enter the school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics which are significantly below average.
- Above average numbers of students achieve the English Baccalaureate.
- Year 7 catch-up funding has secured improvements in the reading age of a number of students.
- Increasing numbers of students are now opting to study all three sciences to GCSE level. In 2013, many attained top grades. Large numbers of students achieve well in French as a result of good teaching.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because students are not making as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have on students' progress to plan activities which meet the needs of all. As a result, more-able students, in particular, are not challenged to give their very best.
- In a Year 11 mathematics lesson students made outstanding progress when calculating area and volume because the teacher ensured that students understood exactly what they need to do to gain the top grades. In other lessons across all subjects, this is not often the case.
- The quality of marking is too variable both within subject areas and between different subjects. Students do not always receive enough advice on what they need to do to improve their work. Few Year 11 students questioned by inspectors had a clear idea of the targets they are aiming for in every subject.
- Students are not developing reading, writing and number skills in all subjects because there are no consistent whole-school approaches to developing students' literacy and numeracy.

- In the best lessons, relationships between students and teachers are excellent. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and probing questioning techniques to deepen students' understanding. Teachers use technology well in lessons which motivates students. Students in Year 7 were particularly excited about their learning when using tablet computers.
- In the past, staffing issues have impacted upon students' progress in mathematics but these have now been resolved. Teaching observed by inspectors in mathematics during the inspection was mainly good.
- Students are confident communicators and their oracy is a strength. In lessons students' verbal responses are often highly imaginative.
- Teaching assistants support the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour and safety of students require improvement because fixed-term exclusions have been too high in the past. Compared to the start of last year the new behaviour policy is resulting in a reduction in exclusions. However, this has not been sustained over a long enough period to be sure that it is embedded.
- A small minority of students are not as punctual to lessons as they could be, particularly after lunch. Behaviour around the school is not always good. A few students do not conduct themselves sensibly when not under direct staff supervision.
- The vast majority of students have positive attitudes to learning and get on well with each other and staff. Students are polite, friendly and very welcoming to visitors. Inspectors observed many examples of students cooperating effectively in lessons.
- Attendance rates are broadly average. Persistent absence has been high in the past but school data indicate that it is reducing as a result of good relationships with families and carers.
- Both parents and students agree that school is a safe place. Students say that senior leaders take effective action to deal with the rare instances of bullying that arise. Students understand the dangers of most types of bullying but are less confident when discussing homophobic bullying.
- Older students known as 'H2H' ('happy to help') have shown maturity and responsibility in helping their youngest peers make the transition from primary school. Students new to Year 7 are enthusiastic about school life and are keen to get involved in after-school clubs and activities, including the school council.
- Good assemblies on 'mindfulness' support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging students to reflect upon how they deal with stressful situations.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders at all levels, including governance, are not systematically evaluating the impact of all aspects of the school's work on students' progress. As a result, the school has not improved sufficiently strongly since the previous inspection. Leadership at all levels needs to develop a more consistent focus on the specific areas which are holding the school back.
- Nevertheless, the school has secured consistently good EBacc results and the new headteacher has made a good start by taking immediate action to improve behaviour and eradicate inadequate teaching. This demonstrates that the school can improve further.
- Data on students' achievement, behaviour and attendance are collected regularly but are not yet analysed sufficiently rigorously to enable leaders to track the progress of groups of students in all year groups. This means that actions to support students who are achieving less well are not

having the impact needed to secure good achievement for all. Hence, despite its aim to do so, the school has not fully achieved equality of opportunity for all.

- Attainment in subjects such as mathematics and some science courses remains too low and the school's strategies have not yet successfully remedied these weaknesses.
- Leaders have not ensured that additional funding is having a rapid enough positive impact on the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium.
- Teachers' pay progression is based on meeting performance targets. Although these targets relate to Teachers' Standards, in the past not all have been specific enough, nor have they been linked closely to the quality of students' progress.
- The new headteacher has already established greater accountability because he is determined to secure good or better teaching. However, senior leaders acknowledge that new systems for monitoring the quality of teachers' work are not yet fully embedded. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching do not focus sharply enough on the progress that students are making in lessons.
- Senior leaders have the full backing of staff and the new headteacher has agreed a vision which will take the school forward. However, the school improvement plan does not give precise enough detail about what steps will be taken to improve attainment. Important areas which are holding the school back are not identified.
- Training time is well planned and helps staff to develop new skills. Newly qualified teachers receive good support through professional and subject mentors. Close links with Bristol and Manchester universities encourage teachers to be more creative and incorporate the latest approaches in learning; this is recognised by other schools both nationally and internationally.
- Leaders' current focus on 'mindfulness' is making a significant contribution to both students' well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students speak with enthusiasm about the range of musical and sporting activities, including numerous study trips at home and overseas.
- The local authority has provided aspects of support at the request of senior leaders. Senior leaders have recently used external consultants to help them evaluate the success of the school's work.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - An external review of the governing body is recommended because governors have not offered leaders both the support and challenge required to ensure that all groups of students achieve well across all subjects. Not all governors understand published data on the school's performance. However, governing body minutes indicate that governors know about the quality of teaching, how staff are rewarded and how pay progression must be linked to teachers' performance. Governors are aware about how additional funding is spent and recognise that students eligible for the pupil premium achieve less well. Governors are committed to supporting the school by attending appropriate training.

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	105839
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	426325

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	801
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Birchenough
Headteacher	Mark Moorhouse
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2010
Telephone number	01706 632910
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