

# The Hollins Technology College

Hollins Lane, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 2QY

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Most students enter with attainment that is slightly below average and make good, sometimes outstanding progress.
- The progress of students of average ability was significantly above average in English in 2012. Students eligible for the pupil premium made progress in mathematics that was also significantly above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Some of it is outstanding.
- Attendance is above average and improving.
- The school is a place of safety where students behave well. They are polite and considerate of adults and of each other.
- The school is strongly led by the headteacher. The good support that he receives from senior leaders has led to improvements in teaching and in students' behaviour.
- The governing body has a good overview of the school's work and holds the school to account well. Governors challenge the school effectively on matters of finance and the performance of teachers.
- The school's exceptionally strong sense of commitment to its community underpins everything it does. This contributes greatly to students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement has not yet improved to the point where it is consistently outstanding.
- Although teaching is good, some marking does not give students enough information about their progress and they do not have enough chances to make decisions about their own learning.
- Improvement planning needs to be more sharply focused on the achievement of specific groups of learners, especially some of those who are eligible for the pupil premium, or have special educational needs, especially in English.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 part lessons, four jointly with senior leaders.
- They observed behaviour around the school and in the grounds and looked at students' work in lessons.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior and other leaders and three members of the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority. Formal discussions took place with four groups of students. Other students spoke with inspectors informally. The lead inspector listened to the views of a small number of students and their parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspection team considered a range of school documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school development plan and records of observations of teaching and learning, as well as information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors reviewed 38 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed 65 completed staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Susan Wareing, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Addison

Additional Inspector

Timothy Gartside

Additional Inspector

Derek Barnes

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-size secondary school.
- The school has had a technology specialism since 2000.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after by the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- Fewer students than nationally are of minority ethnic heritage but the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action, school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Three students from Years 10 and 11 attend full-time off-site provision at Accrington and Rossendale College, where they follow motor vehicle courses as well as English and mathematics.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school runs in-house extended services for which it has a Quality Mark.
- The school is in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University and Edge Hill University for Initial Teacher Training and Education.

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching, so that the majority is outstanding, by ensuring that:
  - all marking provides students with regular, detailed feedback on their work and how to improve it
  - all teachers check that students have acted on their advice and guidance and give time in lessons for students to respond
  - all teachers plan work that is exactly matched to the different needs of groups and individual students.
  - all teachers capitalise on students' very positive attitudes by giving them more opportunities to make decisions about their own learning.
- Raise achievement by ensuring that all planning to improve the school is more sharply targeted on specific groups of students, notably those eligible for the pupil premium, and those students who have special educational needs and are supported by school action or school action plus, especially in English.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students starting points when they join the school are slightly lower than the national average. In recent years, despite a dip in 2012, the proportion of students who gain five GCSE passes at Grades A\* to C including English and mathematics has been at least equal to the national average and generally above it. This represents good progress.
- The number of students making the expected rate of progress in both English and mathematics is consistently above average. In 2012 the proportion of students making more than expected progress rose above the national average both in English and mathematics.
- The progress of students of average ability was significantly above average in English in 2012. Students eligible for the pupil premium also made progress in mathematics that was significantly above the national average, narrowing considerably the gap between their achievement and that of other students in the school and nationally. The gap was not narrowed in English.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action or school action plus did not achieve as well as others. Students with low and high starting points made similar progress to that of their peers.
- Students' achievement in GCSE subjects in recent years has been strong in religious studies, some science courses, English literature and history. Information held by the school indicates that most subjects, including English and mathematics, will have improved their results, including at the higher grades, in the 2013 examinations.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- The school received funding for Year 7 catch-up too late to use it in 2012/13. Senior leaders intend to fund literacy support in Years 7 and 8 in 2013/14.
- The school has made a determined and successful effort to raise the profile of reading and literacy in the school. Students have many opportunities during the week to read for pleasure. Key subject words are emphasised in most lessons and teachers share their own current reading with students. Opportunities for students to practise their mathematical skills are evident in some, but not yet all subjects.
- A very small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend courses away from the school. Daily checks are made on students' attendance and regular visits by a deputy headteacher assure the quality of the courses and students' good progress. All but a very few students enter further education, employment or training when they leave school.
- The achievement of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly similar to that of other students.
- Students' achievement is not yet outstanding because it is not equally good in all subjects. Senior leaders are quick to discontinue unsuccessful courses and this has helped to improve achievement. Senior leaders recognise that they must explore a wider range of actions to ensure that all students make exceptional progress in all subjects.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Observations in lessons, including four carried out jointly with senior leaders, confirmed the school's view that most teaching across the school is good. During the inspection about a third of the teaching seen was outstanding and there was a small proportion of teaching that required improvement. No inadequate teaching was seen.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and their classrooms are places that make students want to learn. Students make good progress because lessons are generally well planned, with resources and activities that are closely matched to students' individual needs. The good and outstanding teachers use skilful questioning to check students' learning and encourage them to think more deeply. Marking informs students of how well they are doing and precisely what they

need to do to improve their work and students have time to respond to teachers' advice and guidance.

- In these better lessons, teachers make good use of students' very positive attitudes to learning, giving them opportunities to work by themselves or with others, on challenging questions. Students thrive on the freedom they are given to make their own decisions about their learning and the time they have to put into practice advice from their teachers.
- The minority of weaker lessons are too heavily directed by the teacher and tasks and resources are not thoughtfully chosen to meet students' needs. In these lessons, students' progress slows and levels of interest wane. Marking is cursory, errors are not followed up and students have little time to act on teachers' advice.
- Since the last inspection the headteacher and senior leaders have taken very effective action to improve the quality of teaching. Very robust systems for checking the quality of teaching have been introduced, through joint observations by senior leaders and a local authority adviser.
- Teachers are supported and challenged to improve their skills through a programme of training and professional development matched to teachers' individual needs. Support is particularly strong in inducting newly qualified teachers and those new to the school into their roles. There are ample opportunities for teachers to share good practice and those in positions of responsibility are strongly encouraged to take a lead.
- Performance-management systems hold teachers to account and support them in equal measure, and senior leaders and governors do not shrink from hard decisions to tackle underperformance.

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

- The behaviour of students is a strength of the school. It is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. Students are very positive about school and get on well with their teachers and each other. Staff are role models of respectful behaviour and, in their turn, students are courteous and considerate towards adults and to each other. Older students take particular care to look after younger ones around the school.
- In the best lessons, this good behaviour makes a strong contribution to students' learning as they cooperate together and support each other. The exemplary care and support that the school provides for the needs of its most vulnerable students has a particularly strong impact on their good behaviour and consequently their good progress from their starting points.
- Students are keen to answer questions, participate enthusiastically in activities and share ideas. Where teaching is weaker, students lack opportunities to make the contributions of which they are capable. They therefore lose interest and become restless.
- A very robust programme of personal, social and health education gives students a very strong awareness of bullying and the school does not tolerate it in any form. Students say they feel safe in school and this is confirmed by the great majority of parents and staff.
- Students say that racial, homophobic or cyber-bullying is uncommon and that it is swiftly and effectively tackled by the school on the rare occasions when it occurs. Students can also point to strong support given to students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered.
- The school has worked tenaciously and with considerable success to ensure that students attend school regularly and punctually. Attendance is now high and improving.
- The school's behaviour policy is very clear and much appreciated by the students for the improvements it has brought about in behaviour in and around the school. This is confirmed by a significant decline in the need for sanctions, including exclusions, over the last two years. The number of permanent exclusions is now similar to the national average and fixed-term exclusions are below it.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher is well respected by leaders at all levels and by the overwhelming majority of parents and students. Since his appointment he has made substantial improvements to the school in the face of significant staffing changes, including at senior leadership level.
- It is to the headteacher's credit that he has built the school's management capacity by giving temporary senior leadership experience to middle leaders. The headteacher now has a capable and supportive team that shares his ambition for the school.
- Leaders have taken effective steps over the last two years to improve teaching significantly. They have identified the right priorities and put in place more robust systems and policies, for example, for checking the quality of teaching and improving behaviour. This shows the school's good capacity for further improvement.
- The school has an honest view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, senior leaders recognise that their improvement planning needs to be even more sharply focused on the achievement of specific groups of learners, notably some of those who are eligible for the pupil premium, are disabled or have special educational needs.
- School leaders have used funding from the pupil premium to provide extra classes in English and mathematics, and small group and individual tuition. In 2012 this narrowed the gap between the achievement of supported students and others in school but was more successful in mathematics than in English.
- Senior leaders have high expectations of middle leaders. These have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and of their roles and are strongly committed to the school's improvement.
- Senior leaders hold teachers to account and scrutinise all aspects of teachers' performance before recommending them for pay progression, and sometimes refuse to grant it.
- The school maintains good links with local schools and, as befits a good school, shares its good practice in a range of subjects including English, mathematics and food technology.
- The curriculum is broadly traditional in Years 7 to 9, and mainly based on GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. The school's specialist subject of design technology is compulsory throughout the school. A small number of non-GCSE courses, for example in science and work skills, have been added for the least-able students. Senior leaders are rightly planning to re-introduce separate sciences for the most-able students.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exemplary. Senior leaders take very seriously their responsibilities for building tolerance within their wider community and are strongly committed to religious studies in the curriculum to support this aim.
- Students are involved in multicultural visits to Manchester and video conferences with overseas schools. The Extended Services Youth Team runs out-of-school activities for other students. A short film 'Muhammad (pbuh) in Accrington' made by one group won a BAFTA award.
- The school works hard to remove any barriers to learning and no form of discrimination is tolerated.
- As a good school, The Hollins receives only 'light touch' support from the local authority. However, the local authority has brokered support from other schools to support the senior leadership team, conducts the headteacher's performance-management appraisal in conjunction with governors and assists the school in checking the quality of teaching.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very experienced, and bring a great deal of expertise from a wide range of professional backgrounds. They are committed to the school and very proud of it, while knowing its strengths and weaknesses very well. They have a good overview of the quality of teaching and oversee the tight links between performance-management targets for all staff and their salaries. They monitor the school's finances and the use and effectiveness of resources, asking challenging questions to hold school leaders fully to account. They are increasingly vigilant with respect to the pupil premium funding. They are given detailed information by the headteacher about the school's performance and understand how to use it

to judge how well the school is doing. However, they do not yet have independent means of checking the accuracy of such information, in order to pre-empt any underachievement. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. They review the impact of what they do and undertake training to improve their own effectiveness. They contribute much to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

## 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>	119757
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427324

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>	779
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Heather Pitman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Campbell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2011
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