

# The Mosslands School

Mosslands Drive, Wallasey, Merseyside, CH45 8PJ

**Inspection dates** 26–27 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Achievement is too variable between subjects and classes. As a result, the standards students reach by the end of Year 11 are average and are not high enough given students' average starting points on entry to the school.
- Over the past three years insufficient numbers of students have made good progress in history and geography and more recently, the most able do not make good enough progress in mathematics.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Progress has not been good, because the courses on offer have been too academic and not always matched the levels of ability of the students.
- Too much teaching requires improvement. It does not always capture students' interest and motivate them well enough to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers do not always provide students with clear written comments and guidance on how to improve their work.
- Behaviour requires improvement because attitudes to learning are not always consistently positive. This hinders the progress students make.
- Not all middle leaders are using the full range of evidence available to them well enough, to assess the progress of students in the areas for which they are responsible.

### The school has the following strengths

- Some teaching is good and some is outstanding, resulting in students making good or better progress in these lessons.
- Students, including those with disabilities, say that they are safe in school. Parents and staff agree strongly with these views.
- There is a good range of well-attended additional activities and clubs that students enjoy.
- The headteacher has a clear view about what needs to be done to improve teaching and achievement.
- Actions taken by the headteacher and other leaders have resulted in many more students reaching higher GCSE grades in English. This demonstrates the leadership's capacity to secure improvement in school.
- Governors are now making a good contribution to improvements in school. They are challenging the headteacher and senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning to accelerate students' achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons given by 40 teachers. Three observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors visited an assembly and made some short visits to tutor groups.
- Inspectors spoke to four groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in school. Inspectors also listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors and two other governors, school staff and two representatives of the local authority. Inspectors also looked at the school’s review of its performance, its development plan, school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and analysed a sample of students’ books from a wide range of subjects.
- Inspectors analysed the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 46 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Rothery	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school for boys is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are White British. With very few exceptions, students speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students 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 alternative providers used by the school are Fairbridge Princes Trust, The Shaftesbury Youth Hub, Basetech Training and Adcote House. The school works in partnership with The Wallasey Schools' Consortium to broaden course choice in the sixth form.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school holds the Investors in People award and is a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre of Excellence.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by ensuring that teachers:
  - plan interesting and creative lessons that motivate students to learn well and to improve their behaviour
  - give students more opportunities to work together so they can make a greater contribution to their own learning and progress
  - plan and set work that matches the needs and abilities of all students more closely
  - mark students' work regularly and use the information gained about how well they are doing more effectively
  - provide specific advice in marking on how students can improve their work
  - manage more effectively the learning of students with special educational needs.
- Improve students' attainment and progress by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve
  - challenging the most-able students more effectively so that they make better progress, particularly in mathematics
  - ensuring that all teachers require their students to act upon the advice given in marking.
- Improve the impact of middle leaders on students' achievement by ensuring:
  - they use the full range of evidence available to them to determine the quality of teaching, learning and students' progress in their subjects
  - they make regular checks on the quality of marking and feedback given to students and how this promotes better progress
  - they provide accurate assessments of students' progress to enable the school to intervene more effectively when needed.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- From average levels of prior attainment on entry to the school, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics is broadly as seen nationally. Following a 'dip' in performance in 2012, particularly in English, attainment rose again to average in 2013. Over time, therefore, students' achievement requires improvement.
- Results in mathematics have been just above average for the past three years. In addition, as a result of good teaching, achievement in modern languages continues to be good.
- Following a concerted effort from the headteacher and senior team, progress and attainment in history and geography are now rising. This systematic approach to raising standards is also having a positive impact in other areas of the curriculum.
- Students generally make the progress expected of them in English and in mathematics across the school but not enough make better than expected progress. Inspection evidence shows that the school is promoting literacy, including spelling, grammar and reading effectively across the school. The promotion and reinforcement of students' numeracy skills are not as widespread but students have additional taught periods of mathematics.
- The most-able pupils reach national standards in most subjects but do not make enough additional progress to reach the highest GCSE grades. In particular, they do not make better than expected progress in mathematics.
- Students following vocational courses achieve well, particularly in information and communication technology.
- The achievement of those students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. The standards they now reach are now much closer to the standards reached by others in the school. For example, the proportion attaining five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is now higher than ever before: they are now attaining one third of a GCSE grade lower than others in the school. This rapid improvement is due to the good support they receive in small teaching groups and also the work of individual mentors. This work is an example of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is variable and for students supported at school action and school action plus is lower than others. Well-founded actions, such as expert classroom support from a highly skilled teacher to support these students are now having a positive impact and their achievement is beginning to rise.
- Year 7 'catch up' funding has been used to provide more one-to-one specialist teaching in English and mathematics. It has also been used to purchase a new 'Accelerated Reader,' to improve students' reading skills. As yet, the impact of these actions has not been fully assessed.
- Overall, achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Courses have not always matched students' abilities and this has led to variation in attainment across subjects and progress that is not always as strong as it should be. The school now offers a wider range of vocational courses to meet the needs of more students, but it is too early to gauge the impact of this offer.
- Almost all students continue in education, employment or training.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the main school and also on occasions in the sixth form. This inconsistency in classroom practice inhibits students from making good or better progress over time in their studies. Teaching therefore requires improvement.
- Teachers do not always plan exciting and interesting work for students. In such lessons, students lose concentration and the pace of learning is too slow to ensure they make good progress.
- In some lessons, students spend too long listening to the teacher and they are all set the same

task. Some find the task too easy and have to wait for others who find the task too hard. Several students believe they are not challenged enough in Years 7 to 9 in order to prepare them well enough for the work in Years 10 and 11.

- Not all teachers create opportunities for the students to learn from each other and to work things out for themselves. This prevents students developing strong enough skills to support their own learning. They therefore become too dependent on the teacher to tell them what they have to do next.
- The marking of students' work is inconsistent across and within subjects. Some marking is irregular, cursory and does not provide helpful guidance to help students to improve their work.
- An analysis of students' work indicates that some marking is good and assists good progress, particularly in English and, on occasions, in history and geography. These departments have certainly benefited from the support of the headteacher and other senior leaders in school.
- When teaching is good or better, students' prior knowledge is used well, lessons move on at a good pace and students are interested in what they are doing. Teachers question students skilfully and organise their classrooms to ensure that students contribute well to their learning by sharing ideas and learning from each other. Teachers here have high expectations of what their students can do and the students strive to achieve well.
- When lessons are well planned and students have opportunities to be creative they respond exceptionally well. In a computer studies lesson, for example, the teacher established students' prior skills in programming and gave them an interesting task to write a game using computer code. Students worked hard to meet the teacher's high expectations. They enjoyed the lesson and made outstanding progress.
- In addition, in lessons where teaching is good or better, teaching assistants are used well to support many students and not just the least able or those with disabilities. They are well-respected by the students and ask thoughtful questions which require students to find things out for themselves.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. Teachers do not always provide students with interesting tasks and this leads to students talking about things other than their work. In these lessons, students are not encouraged to think for themselves so they lose concentration.
- Students are clear about the school's rules and respond quickly when teachers instruct them to pay attention and to address their work in class. When lessons are well planned and teaching is good, students respond well and exhibit good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour is improving and the number of exclusions from school has reduced. Students are responding very positively to the new behaviour policy. They say they appreciate the rewards they can earn for good work and good behaviour.
- The school's concerted efforts to reduce persistent absenteeism have been very effective. During the past year there were almost no pupils who were persistently absent from school. However, the school has not always analysed its absence information rigorously enough to improve overall attendance which is below average. Punctuality to school has improved.
- Around the school, students are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They are confident in discussing their views of school with adults. They treat each other with great respect and move sensibly and safely around the school. This ensures that the school is a harmonious community.
- Students say that there is some bullying, although it is rare and is dealt with effectively by the school when it occurs. The school's records show that during the past year there has been a reduction in the number of incidents considered as bullying. Students are well aware of the many different forms bullying can take.
- The school teaches students to assess personal risk and how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of internet safety.

- Students say they are safe in school and those with disabilities speak very highly about their experiences in school. Parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire and all staff who responded to the staff questionnaire are confident that students are safe in school. Few students attend alternative off-site provision but the safety and progress of those who do are monitored closely by the school.
- Students in the sixth form make a good contribution to the school and to the local community through their work for charity and their collaborations with the local council in community projects. Students feel they get good information and guidance to support their entry to further and higher education and to employment.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not ensured that the quality of teaching and students' progress over time are good. Also, not all middle leaders are using the information available to them well enough to monitor students' progress with accuracy.
- Following his appointment in September 2012, the headteacher has established a new leadership team and supported the formation of a new governing body. He has ensured that his clear views on how successful the school can be and his high ambitions for the school and its students are fully understood by all staff and governors.
- Staff are supported effectively in the drive to improve the school. As a result, the proportion of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has risen and there has been a significant rise in the percentages of higher GCSE grades in English. Senior leaders judge the quality of teaching accurately.
- The school's action plan is based on an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Middle leaders are now guided well by senior leaders to identify how they plan to improve the quality of provision in their areas.
- A thorough system for checking students' progress is being introduced throughout the school. However, not all middle leaders are using the school's systems for checking students' progress well enough. Senior leaders have put a monitoring process in place to ensure that the assessment of students' progress is accurate.
- Some middle leaders are not yet checking students' work in books to make sure that all teachers are providing an interesting range of activities and providing feedback that helps students make good progress. Also, some are overgenerous when judging the quality of teaching.
- Staff are being held to account for their actions through the use of clear job descriptions and a rigorous performance management system. Teachers are set challenging targets to raise standards within the school. Their professional development is well supported to improve the quality of teaching, although it is too early to see the full impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum offers a good range of academic and vocational courses and there is now a greater focus on the development of reading and literacy skills. The school has already hosted a literacy festival for the students.
- Recently, sixth form course choice has been improved to match more closely the needs and abilities of the students. This has been done through collaboration with a number of local schools to form the Wallasey Schools' Consortium, which offers a range of vocational and GCSE-equivalent courses. This is beginning to improve standards in the sixth form.
- The wide range of sporting activities, the debating club, house competitions, school visits, charity work and good provision for the arts contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students say they appreciate the time that teachers give to organise and deliver these additional activities.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school. Through its Improvement Adviser it has assisted the school in developing an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and it supports the development of middle leaders.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors use their skills well to support the school. They have an accurate view of the school through reports from the headteacher, middle leaders and some visits and meetings in school. They understand student progress data and ask searching questions of the headteacher to determine what needs to be done to improve standards. The governing body knows the main priorities for the school and sets challenging targets for the headteacher and senior leadership. Governors use their skills and make checks on the school's budget and plan for the future. They have approved the use of pupil premium funding to employ additional support for students and know that gaps in attainment have closed as a result. Governors oversee the arrangements linking teachers' performance and pay and they know what is being done to improve the quality of teaching. When teachers' targets are not met they challenge the headteacher to ensure that there is improvement. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and the school rejects all forms of discrimination.

## 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>	105103
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	426177

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>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	871
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Adrian Whiteley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6388131
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