

Sir John Hunt Community Sports College

Lancaster Gardens, Plymouth, PL5 4AA

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 achieve well. They make good progress in almost all subjects including mathematics and especially English and literacy. They attain broadly average GCSE results from very low starting points.
- Students eligible for additional government funding achieve particularly well and gaps between their attainment compared with other students are small.
- There is a high proportion of outstanding teaching, notably of English and literacy. Teachers have high expectations of their students and prepare work that challenges them well.
- Rigorous management of teachers' performance has led to major improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Students behave well because expectations of them are clear and they receive good care and support. Exclusions have reduced in recent years and attendance has improved.
- Students say there is little bullying and other evidence supports this view.
- School leaders and governors have high aspirations for every student and are rightly aiming for the school to become outstanding.
- The sixth form is good. Combined with the Learning Café, which has extended the school's opening hours, the sixth form has contributed to a significant increase in the number of leavers proceeding into employment, education or training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Students' achievement in history and design and technology is less good than in other subjects because teaching is not as effective in these subjects as others in the school and aspirations are low.
- Students' achievement in science is more variable than in most other subjects because in some lessons are not challenging enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 teachers teaching. About one quarter of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors listened to students reading. They reviewed documents, including those relating to students' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding, and to the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 16 parents and carers who submitted them on the Parent View website, and of staff who completed a questionnaire, were analysed and taken into account. A number of written communications from parents and carers were also considered.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kevin Wright	Additional Inspector
Christine Emerson	Additional Inspector
Marian Marks	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average size secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average, while the proportion who are supported through school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is average. These students have a range of needs including physical disabilities and emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- About one third of Year 7 students are eligible for catch-up funding which is for students who did not achieve the expected standard in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The sixth form opened in September 2010, offering a limited range of vocational courses. It was expanded to offer the full range in September 2011. The teaching of some sixth form courses is shared with two other local secondary schools.
- The school is part of the Plymouth Learning Trust that commissions a range of training providers to deliver vocational qualifications at a range of locations. A management group drawn from a number of Plymouth schools oversees safeguarding arrangements for this initiative.
- The new school buildings opened in September 2008 and are shared with a primary school and a special school. Together these three schools form a federation known as The Wood View Learning Community, under the control of a federated governing body. However each school has its own Principal or headteacher and in 2013 the governing body changed its structure so that almost all its functions are led by separate management committees for each school.
- Through a facility known as the Learning Café, opened in November 2012, the school is open for students to learn before and after each school day, during the school holidays and sometimes at weekends.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and hence students' achievement in history and design and technology by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve
 - providing interesting and challenging tasks that meet students' learning needs.
- Ensure that all students achieve equally well in science by:
 - improving the quality of learning of all students, matching teaching of the subject to the good and better teaching in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of students attaining at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has increased over time so that in 2013 more than half attained this standard. In 2012, there was a severe dip in this measure. Although this was in part due to external factors beyond the control of senior leaders, immediate and successful action was taken to put things right.
- Students start school in Year 7 with very low levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Some are unable to read and write properly. They make good progress, so that by the end of Year 11 all attain at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to G.
- In English and the development of literacy skills, students make very good progress so that in 2013 more than two thirds of Year 11 leavers obtained a GCSE English pass at grade C or above. Evidence from their work and the school's tracking of their progress shows that current students are on course to attain even better standards in the future. The school makes good use of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding through, for example, one-to-one tuition.
- Students' progress in mathematics and the use of numeracy is improving rapidly. The progress made by Year 11 leavers in 2013 was in line with national averages, an improvement on previous years. As with English, there is good evidence that current students' achievement in mathematics is improving further.
- Other subjects where current students achieve well include music, religious education, Spanish and in the school's specialism of sport and physical education.
- In 2013, in all their GCSE subjects, almost all groups of leavers had made progress that was well above national averages. This included boys, girls, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and those in receipt of the pupil premium, demonstrating the success of the school's promotion of equality of opportunity.
- In the case of students in receipt of the pupil premium, in 2012 their average attainment in GCSE English and mathematics was about three quarters of a grade lower than that of other students in both subjects. In 2013, this gap had reduced to about one quarter of a grade in each subject and the school's tracking of progress shows that by 2014 the gaps should be virtually eliminated.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well, shown by the fact that all leave school with at least five GCSEs at grades A* to G. Those who have reading and other learning difficulties make very good progress because of the high quality of the teaching they receive.
- In the sixth form students make good progress from starting points that are well below those found in most sixth forms. In 2013, for the first time in the school's history, students entered university directly from the school. Students make especially good progress on courses that directly prepare them for particular careers, such as medical science or public services. Students make equally good progress on courses taught by other schools and through the Plymouth Learning Trust.
- Students' achievement in a few subjects, notably history and design and technology, is less than good as the courses offered do not meet their needs and the quality of teaching is weak. In science, an above-average proportion of students attain at least a grade C at GCSE, but there is greater variation in achievement between year and teaching groups than in other subjects. This is because of differences in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of the teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and more than one third of the teaching observed by inspectors was outstanding. In English it is often outstanding, from when lower-attaining Year 7 students read and punctuated a text about

'leaving home', to an analysis of *Death of a Salesman* by Year 13 students.

- A notable feature of much teaching is the high expectations that teachers have of students. In a Year 7 music lesson, the teacher used several approaches to develop an understanding of 'beat count' so that students were able to play a recognisable piece on the keyboard by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers plan lessons that meet their students' needs well, such as by encouraging them to read aloud in a range of subjects to improve their literacy skills and self-confidence. Teachers frame searching questions but do not always ensure that all students are involved in question and answer sessions.
- Marking is generally used well to show students how to improve their work. They are given an indication of the level or GCSE grade at which they are working and have challenging targets to aim for. In religious education, Year 7 students reviewed their own work, giving them insight into the meaning of the parables and contributing to their spiritual and moral development.
- Scrutiny of work, the school's records of progress and the opinions of students themselves combine to confirm that teaching has steadily improved and that students are making consistently good progress due to teaching that is routinely good.
- Agreed approaches to developing literacy and numeracy skills enable students to make good progress in many subjects. For example, lower-attaining Year 9 students were able to draw accurate graphs in science and interpret them because of the good teaching they had received in mathematics.
- Students rightly admire their teachers. They say that they 'go the extra mile' for them. They are aware that teachers give their own time for activities outside school hours, such as sports events and the Learning Café. The enthusiasm of many staff for their work, and for helping the students to achieve, is a notable feature. For example, the person responsible for widening opportunities for the most-able and talented students spoke with lively enthusiasm about her work.
- Additional adults with a variety of job titles are effective in enabling students to learn quickly. Many have skills in managing the behaviour of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties so that the learning of others is not slowed by incidents of challenging behaviour.
- Where teaching is weaker, as in history and design and technology, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve is too low and tasks do not motivate or challenge students, hence they lose interest and behaviour deteriorates.
- In science, teachers sometimes allow students too much time to carry out a task. They complete the task and stop working, slowing their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well around the school and in almost all lessons, the few exceptions being when the tasks they are given do not motivate them to learn. Many students start at the school with emotional or behavioural difficulties or with poor social skills. Additional adults are very skilled at managing and improving such behaviour, contributing to students' social and moral development and enabling all students to achieve well.
- There is a very pleasant atmosphere in the light, modern dining hall which is used as the Learning Café outside school hours. Staff, including teachers and the effective learning mentors, circulate and assist students with learning and other issues. This demonstrates the school's success in fostering good relationships. Students also praise the Learning Café as a safe place where they can escape from external pressures.
- Students say that there is little bullying and the school's records confirm this. The number of exclusions has reduced steadily and is now about average for fixed-term exclusions and is below average for permanent exclusions. The school regularly admits students who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from other schools and usually these students subsequently achieve well. This and other factors such as the lack of racist or homophobic bullying demonstrate the school's success in tackling discrimination.

- Students' behaviour and safety when taught by other providers are monitored carefully, and give no cause for concern.
- Students have a good understanding of safe behaviour in their urban environment. They are aware of the safe use of electronic media and the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
- The school has successfully reduced formerly high levels of absence to the national average. It has had particular success in reducing persistent absence to the national average; a few years ago it was very high. The family liaison officer has played a major part in bringing about these improvements.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal is determined to raise the staff's expectation of what students are capable of achieving and to eradicate weak teaching. This is rightly her highest priority. It has been a lengthy task which is now close to being fully successful. She has faced intransigence and recruitment difficulties, notably in mathematics, which have been successfully resolved with the good support of the governing body and local authority, whose support in other areas is also effective. The management of staff performance is rigorous, accurate, linked to pay progression and has contributed to improvement.
- Senior leaders and the governing body recognise what needs to be done and in many areas have achieved a great deal. Data are now used much more effectively than in the past to monitor progress and plan suitable work. The progress of groups of students is monitored well, not only of those groups which form national priorities, such as those eligible for the pupil premium, but also groups of individuals who have particular need for sensitive care and support, such as those with a relative in prison.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. A high priority is given to overcoming literacy or learning difficulties. The school rarely enters students early for GCSE examinations. Rightly, the school is moving back to the use of GCSE examinations after a period focusing on other accredited courses designed to raise students' aspirations.
- School leaders, and in fact all staff, are proud of the fact that Sir John Hunt can rightly claim to be a fully inclusive school. The sixth form does not have formal entry requirements and provides suitable courses for all. In 2013, three quarters of Year 11 entered the sixth form.
- The acceptance of any Year 11 students who wish to stay on into the sixth form, together with improved achievement and the Learning Café (partly funded by the pupil premium), has led to a significant reduction in the proportion of school leavers not in education, employment or training from more than one in eight a few years ago to less than one in 50 at the time of the inspection.
- The school works hard to engage with parents and carers, including those who find working with the school a challenge. Attendance at consultation evenings is now high. Many parents and carers do not have access to the internet, hence the low response to the Parent View survey. The school's own surveys show high levels of parental satisfaction as do the several letters received by inspectors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The reorganisation of the federation governing body has improved its focus on the work of the school. Several newly appointed governors are inexperienced, but they have a useful range of skills and are receiving good training. They challenge school leaders effectively and are becoming increasingly adept at interpreting data. They understand the school's performance compared with national standards but school leaders report that governors' requests for data sometimes increase their workload significantly.
 - Staff performance is reported to governors and they know where improvements are still required. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities, for example for child protection and to keep students safe. Governors monitor the impact of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding and are aware of the achievement of these pupils and the impact of how the funding has been spent. The required pupil premium statements are present on the school's website but are hard to find.

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	113533
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	426798

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	773
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Wraight
Principal	Wendy Brett
Date of previous school inspection	29 February – 1 March 2012
Telephone number	01752 201020
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