

Chesterfield High School

Chesterfield Road, Crosby, Liverpool, L23 9YB

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

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.

- Achievement is good. From their individual starting points, all students and groups of students achieve well in a wide range of subjects, particularly in English.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of individual students' strengths and areas for development, and provide them with good feedback about how to improve their work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use it effectively to provide carefully constructed activities which enable students to make good progress over time.
- Students behave well in school. They are courteous to each other and to adults, and have good attitudes to learning, arriving at lessons on time and with the correct equipment. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure within school is outstanding. Students feel safe because they are confident that adults are always on hand to help them and that any problems will be quickly resolved.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders and governors take extremely rigorous steps to check how well the school is performing. They use their findings to plan clear actions to bring about improvements, including providing very effective training for teachers. As a result, teaching and achievement have improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- The sixth form is good and well led. It provides students with an appropriate mix of vocational and academic courses as well as a broad range of positive enrichment experiences. Students achieve well as a result.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough students reach the highest grades, A* and A, at either GCSE or A level.
- In the sixth form, students do not do as well in academic subjects as they do in vocational.
- Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to improve their work in response to marking and feedback.
- Students are not always excited by learning and, very occasionally, a minority of them lose concentration in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 38 lessons taught by 36 different teachers. One of these lessons was observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour around the school as well as in lessons. They talked with students informally about their learning, as well as holding more formal meetings with groups of students of different abilities, and from the sixth form.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the teaching staff and the governing body. In addition, inspectors met with a consultant from LiNCS.
- The views of 40 parents who responded to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as information collected by the school about the views of parents.
- The inspection team examined a range of documentation, including data about students' achievement from internal tracking systems and analysis provided by school leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' monitoring records, including minutes of governing body meetings and information provided relating to attendance, safeguarding and behaviour.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Nicholson	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Chesterfield Academy is a larger than average sized secondary school, with a sixth form. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium funding is slightly above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, the children of service families, and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students who are supported at school action is average. The proportions supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs are slightly higher than the national average.
- The school makes alternative provision for a small number of students at Oakfield and Impact.
- The school has a small sixth form which offers a range of vocational and academic subjects.
- School leaders work in partnership with other schools in LiNCS (Leadership in North and Central Sefton) to provide training opportunities for staff and to quality assure aspects of its work.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teaching over time is outstanding and so improve achievement, by:
 - constantly providing high levels of challenge for the most able to ensure that more students reach the highest grades at GCSE and A level
 - ensuring that students in the sixth form achieve as well in academic subjects as they do in vocational
 - ensuring that learning experiences always enthuse students and inspire them with a love of learning
 - building on the good practice which exists in marking and feedback to ensure that all teachers provide opportunities for students to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' achievement has accelerated recently. In 2013, the proportions of students gaining five good GCSEs, including in English and mathematics, was well above the national average, and the proportions of students achieving well in English were particularly high.
- In the GCSE examinations in 2013, there was some variation in the achievement of students in certain subjects, particularly in modern foreign languages and humanities. School leaders and teachers have worked hard to address these variations, with significant success.
- The school's current data indicates that across the school in almost every subject high proportions of students are making good progress. Observations during the inspection of students' achievement in lessons, and scrutiny of the work in their books, confirms that over time students are now achieving well.
- In 2013, not enough students reached the highest grades at GCSE, and some of the most able students underachieved. School leaders are aware of this and have taken steps to address it, such as putting in additional support for individual students who are vulnerable and at risk of underachieving. They have also ensured that teachers understand the need to increase the levels of challenge for the most able. Data indicates that these measures are having an impact, and that the most able students are now making good progress.
- There are clear whole-school literacy and numeracy action plans, and as a result, the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills has a high profile across the school. For example, in Years 10 and 11 all students receive additional support for English and mathematics during tutor time. This support enables students to make good progress because it is very specifically focused on developing the precise skills that students need, such as improving the use of punctuation or developing their vocabulary in English, or solving real-life money problems in mathematics.
- Lower down the school, Year 7 catch-up funding is being well used to promote reading, and there is clear evidence from leaders' detailed tracking systems that the reading skills of those students supported in this way are improving rapidly as a result.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs also achieve well because of the high quality of the additional programmes and support they receive. Their attainment is typically well above that of similar groups of students nationally. The achievement and well-being of students who attend alternative provision is monitored well by the school, and all are on track to achieve qualifications well suited to their needs.
- Students for whom the pupil premium provides support are making good progress. In English in 2013 for example, a higher proportion of those students made expected progress than non-pupil premium students nationally. Currently, in other subjects including mathematics, the attainment of those students known to be eligible for free school meals is rising rapidly; and the gaps between their progress and attainment and that of those students in school who are not supported by the pupil premium funding are closing. This is because the funding is spent wisely and its impact is carefully monitored.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form overall. However, while progress in vocational subjects is well above expectations, progress in academic subjects is mainly in line with what is expected. School leaders are addressing this by raising aspirations through developing links with universities, with some success. In 2013, of 54 students 99% received a place at their first choice university.
- This year the school has entered 16 students early for mathematics GCSE. All have achieved at least their targets and are now either resitting to see if they can exceed their targets, or doing higher level mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection because of good leadership and effective

training for staff. The vast majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good, and it is evident from what students said and from looking at the work in their books that this is typical of teaching over time.

- Teachers create positive climates for learning, where students are well supported and keen to do well. Teachers know their students well, and provide learning activities which meet the needs of the different abilities in the class and enable them all to make progress.
- Where achievement is good, particularly in English, teaching is characterised by carefully planned learning experiences which build on each other to promote progress. Resources are attractive and of high quality. Students have a clear understanding of what they are aiming to achieve because they are involved in setting their own criteria for success. They also have opportunities to reflect on their learning by assessing their own and their peers' work. Teachers are very confident in their subject knowledge and skilled in sharing that knowledge with the students. Work is marked regularly and feedback makes it clear to students how they can improve and reach their targets.
- Where progress is most rapid, there is a focus on relating students' interests and knowledge to the topics being studied. For example, in English students' knowledge of popular culture was used to encourage them to explore the theme of attitudes to women in old texts. Students responded extremely well to an entertaining reading of an example of such a text and all students participated and shared their ideas in response to the skilful management of their discussion. In music, students intelligently explored rhythm and key signatures and developed their musical appreciation because of skilful questioning and knowledgeable teaching. This enabled them to evaluate and improve their work.
- In the few cases where achievement is slower, the most able students are not always sufficiently challenged, which slows down the pace of their learning. Students are not always given sufficient opportunity to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. They take good care of each other and are polite to visitors, responding courteously and quickly to questions.
- Movement around the school is very orderly. Despite the fact that there are some narrow corridors, there is no jostling and students take care to ensure safe behaviour on the stairs. Behaviour in the dining hall is very good, and students enjoy the opportunity for eating and socialising.
- Students care for the school environment and ensure that there is very little litter.
- Students are punctual to lessons and arrive properly equipped and ready to learn. As a result, lessons proceed at a brisk pace.
- Students behave well in lessons. They follow the teacher's instructions quickly and are responsive and keen to answer questions. They settle to their work quickly, and take pride in ensuring that work in books is neat, well presented and complete.
- Scrutiny of the school's behaviour records indicates that good behaviour is typical. Students all say that behaviour has improved over the last two years because of very good leadership. This has ensured that teachers employ the school's behaviour management systems consistently and that students are clear about what is expected of them.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Attendance is a strong focus across the school and attendance for all groups of students has improved and is now above average. Students feel very safe in school because they are confident that teachers care well for them. They are aware of risk, and have been taught how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet.
- The school's systems for tracking any misbehaviour are extremely robust. They show, for example, that there are very few incidents of bullying and that they are dealt with effectively, with few repeat offences. Students confirm this to be the case.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because attitudes to learning are not yet outstanding. They are not

always excited by learning, and when teaching is less than good students' attention can wander.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection because of the effective leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by other members of the senior leadership team. Leaders are honest and systematic in checking how well the school is performing, and take swift action to bring about improvement.
- Leaders have very high expectations, and have communicated them clearly to all staff. Middle leaders fully accept that they are accountable for the progress of students in their subjects and all talk of students' achievement being the highest priority in the school. All have clear action plans with priorities which are entirely focused on raising achievement, although some would benefit from having clearer success criteria. Progress against these action plans is checked regularly by senior leaders. As a result, achievement is improving in a number of subjects, including science, languages and the humanities.
- The school's thorough performance management systems have been a significant factor in improving teachers' performance, coupled with effective training for teachers. There is clear identification of teachers' strengths and areas for development based on the standards for teachers, and these are used to set robust targets based on students' achievement. Extensive training is provided to improve teachers' performance. Teachers say that although leaders have very high expectations, they provide good support and make good role models, leading by example.
- Systems for tracking students' progress are very effective and enable teachers to identify early students who are at risk of underachieving. Consequently, support is quickly put into place to get them back on track.
- The curriculum is broad and provides students with an appropriate range of flexible and academic pathways. It is enhanced by a number of enrichment activities, including visits to places of educational interest, as well as opportunities to participate in sporting, drama and music activities. Students are encouraged to be actively involved in the school community by acting as sports leaders, mentors and by being part of the school council. All this makes very effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Promotion of equal opportunities is good. Leaders have taken effective steps to remove barriers to achievement, for example, by careful spending of the pupil premium funding, and as a result, any gaps between the achievement of different groups are closing.
- Leaders are outward looking and work in partnership with other schools in LiNCS, supported by a consultant seconded from the local authority. This enables them to quality assure their work and improve the school's performance by, for example, participating in additional training for middle leaders and teachers. Leadership is characterised by a determination to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors' knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development is impressive. They insist on being provided with detailed information, for example, national comparative data about the school's performance, and on having quality training to ensure that they understand what they hear and read. They are also proactive in taking steps to address any issues. For example, governors are all linked to specific aspects of the school's work, based on their own skills and experience, and when any issues are raised that particular governor is charged with working with school leaders to check practices and processes. They have developed a number of systems for maximising the efficiency of their work, such as monthly meetings between the chairs of sub-committees and they receive regular updates from staff other than the headteacher. Governors check the impact of the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch up funding, and have robust systems for checking on performance management and ensuring that teachers' performance is linked to pay progression. All this ensures that they are able to hold leaders to account well for the performance of the school.

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	137514
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	430990

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,174
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Battersby
Headteacher	Simon Penney
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2012
Telephone number	0151 924 6454
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