

# Norden High School and Sports College

Stourton Street, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 4ED

**Inspection dates** 13–14 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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

- There is not enough good teaching. Teachers give some students work which is too hard and others work which is too easy.
- Teachers do not always make sure that students think deeply enough in order to increase their knowledge.
- Marking does not always show students how to improve their work and students do not always follow such advice.
- At the end of Year 11 in 2013, standards were below average, including in English and mathematics. Not enough students make more than the expected rate of progress.
- Some students' written work is weak and they do not always write enough. Not all students are encouraged to read widely.
- There are limited opportunities for students to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in the different subjects.
- A minority of students do not expect to work hard in every lesson, especially when working by themselves. For this reason, students' behaviour requires improvement.
- The progress of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is not yet good enough.
- Some middle and subject leaders do not make close enough checks to ensure that all students are making at least good progress in reading and writing and do not provide extra help quickly enough where this is needed.
- The school's plans for further improvement are too extensive to enable a precise focus on the areas in greatest need of improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteachers provide strong leadership with a sharp emphasis on improving teaching and students' achievement. They have a highly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders and governors have secured some necessary improvements in achievement since the 2013 GCSE examination results.
- Improvements have been most marked in English.
- Students' behaviour around the school is usually good. They are polite and friendly.
- Students who spoke with the inspectors say that they feel safe in school and that the school takes good care of them.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 28 lessons taught by 28 teachers. Nine observations were made jointly with members of the school’s senior staff.
- The inspectors took account of 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of a survey of parents’ views provided by the school.
- Inspectors examined information on students’ performance for the school year 2012/13 and detailed information provided by the school on current learning and progress. They also looked at work in students’ books.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, and with five representatives of the governing body. They also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with three groups of students and spoke informally with other students and members of staff at different times in the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own evaluation of its work, its plans for further improvement, information on the quality of teaching and on teachers’ performance and documents relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brian Hill	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most secondary schools.
- The large majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students attend courses away from the school on a temporary basis at Accrington and Rossendale College.
- Since the previous inspection in January 2013, there have been major changes to staff roles and responsibilities. This includes the appointment of two deputy headteachers in place of three assistant headteachers. One of the deputy headteachers joined the school in January 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better by:
  - providing work and help which enables students of all abilities to make at least good progress in lessons
  - extending the examples of effective marking to ensure that students know how to improve their work and by making sure that students respond to the teachers' comments
  - encouraging students to think more deeply, so that they develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Increase the rate of students' progress by:
  - improving the quality of students' written work in the different subjects, with particular attention to presentation, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and to the amount of written work that students complete
  - making sure that students of all abilities are encouraged to read widely and often
  - providing opportunities for students to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics and in other subjects
  - ensuring that all students come to all lessons expecting to work hard and to complete a good amount of work, particularly when asked to work by themselves.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making sure that subject and middle leaders check students' progress regularly, particularly in reading and writing, to ensure that all students are making at least good progress
  - checking the progress of all students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and providing effective additional help where this is needed
  - ensuring that the school's plans for further improvement and the actions of all leaders are sharply focused on the school's most urgent priorities.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because, although attainment and progress are improving, they are not yet good in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Although students generally make expected progress, too few do better than this.
- In general, students join Year 7 with standards that are lower than expected in both English and mathematics.
- For the last three years, the proportion of students who left Year 11 with five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has been below average. The school's results dropped further in 2013, due mainly to a decline in English.
- Detailed information kept by the school shows that the attainment of current students is improving and that this improvement is most marked in English.
- Despite this, the written work of many students is poor and they do not always write enough. In addition, the work of many students is not presented well and they show weak skills in handwriting and inaccurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is restricting their performance in several subjects of the curriculum because they are unable to give clear written answers.
- In contrast, many other students, particularly the most able, take great care with their written work in the different subjects. They are able to write at length and in detail in a lively and imaginative style and they use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. These students also speak well and are able to give extended and well-thought out answers to teachers' questions. Overall, more of the most-able students are now making good progress.
- Those who have special educational needs and significant literacy difficulties are identified quickly and receive extra help which is accelerating their progress in reading and spelling. The school is achieving this by making good use of the Year 7 catch-up programme, for those students who did not reach the nationally expected standard in reading at the end of Year 6.
- Many students of all abilities can read accurately and fluently, but not all of these students choose to read regularly and for different purposes because teachers do not encourage them to read widely and often in lessons or at home.
- Similarly, students are taught calculation skills in mathematics, but because they have fewer opportunities to practise these skills, they are not always able to solve problems in mathematics or in other subjects.
- Students are making good progress in art, music and drama.
- Despite weaknesses in skills in English and mathematics, most students feel prepared for work or the next stage of education. This is because there are effective links between the school and colleges, which ease students' transition.
- Students who attend Accrington and Rossendale College on a temporary basis are making good progress because of their interest in the work-related courses they follow.
- No students are taking English and mathematics GCSE examinations before the end of Year 11. This is giving them time to complete the courses and to do as well as they can.
- In the 2013 English and mathematics GCSE examinations, the average attainment of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium was the equivalent of one GCSE grade below that of other students in English and one and a half grades in mathematics. Currently, the progress of this group of students is improving and most of these students are now making expected or better progress, particularly in English. However, their progress is not yet good.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teaching is not yet ensuring students' good progress over time and there is too much variation between different classes in the same

subject.

- Significant staff absence and the changes to many teachers' roles since the previous inspection caused instability, which was particularly marked in English. This instability has reduced considerably and with effective leadership and strong guidance from the deputy headteacher since January 2014, teaching is improving rapidly.
- Some students are challenged regularly to think deeply and to explain their answers in detail. This is developing their knowledge and understanding and is helping to increase the rate of their progress over time. However, this is not consistent, so that too often students are content to give short spoken or written answers and complete very little work.
- There are times when students are expected to work by themselves. Some do this well, but others waste time and teachers do not always step in to stop this quickly enough. For example, sometimes students spend too long talking to their friends about topics unrelated to the lesson.
- Some work is carefully planned to meet the needs of the students and ensure that all students make progress. However, occasionally, all the students have the same work, which is too hard for some and too easy for others, especially for students working in the lower- and middle-ability sets.
- The work of teaching assistants varies because they do not always know what is expected of them or they are used mainly to give out resources. On the other hand, there are times when they play a key part in helping the students to make progress.
- Most work is marked regularly, but sometimes this is with no more than a tick or general comment. Consequently, students do not know how to improve their work. Where they are given such advice, students are not always given the opportunity to follow it. Despite this, there are examples of effective assessment and marking and occasions when work is adjusted in light of what students already know and can do, but this is not widespread.
- Increasingly effective teaching of the most-able students is accelerating their progress. Many of these students are encouraged to work hard and understand what is expected of them because the teacher makes this clear.
- The teaching of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium varies from class to class and from subject to subject. The school now has accurate and detailed information about the progress of these students and has started to use this information to provide additional help, particularly for the less-able students. However, the school does not have yet a clear view as to which actions are proving most effective in increasing the progress of all of these students.
- The quality of teaching of students with special educational needs varies and, as a result, so does their progress. However, some of the extra help they receive is improving their skills in reading and spelling.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is, particularly, because a minority of students come to some lessons expecting to do very little work and this limits their progress. Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour, but a few students are easily distracted from their work and not all teachers manage their behaviour effectively.
- Some students take pride in their work and take care of their books and equipment. However, this is not always the case and some students take little care, particularly with handwriting and presentation.
- Attendance was well below average in 2012/13. The school's current attendance information shows a marked improvement and attendance is now close to the national average. This is the result of the school's effective actions.
- Students generally behave well around the school and most are polite to one another and to adults, although there are times when a few are boisterous.
- Students generally take care of the school buildings and follow the school's uniform rules.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say that bullying and the use of derogatory language are rare, although there is very occasional name-calling or

disagreement. Students understand the different forms of bullying and know where to go for help should they need it and the school keeps clear records of incidents and actions taken.

- All students who gave a view say that they feel safe and the great majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) agree with this view.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- The governing body, headteacher and deputy headteachers provide strong leadership which is improving teaching and students' achievement.
- Following the previous inspection in January 2013, the headteacher led major changes to the roles of staff. As a result, other leaders are relatively new to their current roles, so that they are not yet having a full effect on teaching and students' achievement. For this reason, leadership and management require improvement.
- The deputy headteachers are proving to be highly effective, despite the short length of time they have been in post. One deputy headteacher has developed detailed records of the progress of all groups of students, which gives a clear and accurate view of the effectiveness of teaching over time.
- The other deputy headteacher, who joined the school in January 2014, has acted swiftly in bringing about marked improvements to the quality of teaching. The judgements of the three senior leaders about the school's overall effectiveness are highly accurate. Their work is securing the improvements needed in teaching and progress since the 2013 GCSE examination results.
- Senior leaders challenge teaching which requires improvement and provide training and support where necessary, but this work is not yet complete.
- Middle leaders are still developing their new roles in the different areas or subjects. There is extensive information about students' performance, but not all leaders are checking closely enough the progress of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium or the progress of all students in reading and writing. As a result, these students do not receive the help they need quickly enough. This means that all do not get an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The courses provided generally meet students' needs, although the opportunities to use and develop their literacy and mathematical skills in the different subjects are sometimes limited. However, students receive good advice about further education, training or work as they move through the school and this supports their access to future opportunities once they leave.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement, in particular because some students do not work hard and show limited cultural understanding.
- The school has detailed plans for further improvement, but these contain a large number of actions and do not necessarily emphasise the areas in greatest need of improvement. Consequently leaders are giving themselves a large number of tasks to be completed at once.
- The local authority has helped the school to confirm the accuracy of its own judgements about its effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has taken the right steps in starting to improve the school. Governors have a detailed and highly accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and students' achievement, which is based on visits to the school and on the detailed reports they receive. In addition, they have developed a systematic and rigorous approach to reviewing their own work and that of the school. They have a clear understanding of teachers' performance and have acted to ensure that in the future, only good or better teaching is rewarded. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet the government's requirements. Governors understand how the pupil premium is spent, but recognise that currently too few of these students are making good progress. They would welcome external review of the use of the pupil premium in order to make further improvements.

## 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>	119717
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442397

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>	572
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elaine Lockwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 885378
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