

# Stanley High School

Fleetwood Road, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 9TF

## Inspection dates

17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders, managers and governors have not sustained the 2013 improved standards and progress into 2014.
- Some groups of students, including disadvantaged students, make slower progress than the main group of students in the school. These students did not achieve the standards they were capable of in 2014.
- Teachers do not always explain what they are teaching clearly enough, so some students are unsure how to complete their work and improve their understanding, especially students working from lower starting points.
- Leaders evaluate some aspects of the school's performance more carefully than others, so the school is not always fully aware of the inconsistencies in teaching and student progress.
- The curriculum does not yet meet the needs of all students. Some courses do not enable students to attain high standards.
- A number of teachers, senior and subject leaders have only recently been appointed and their work to improve teaching has not yet been fully implemented.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors took decisive steps in 2012 to restructure staffing, so standards and progress improved in 2013.
- Students behave well in lessons and around school. They feel safe in school and the majority of parents agree they are safe.
- Attendance is above national averages. Fewer students are excluded from school compared with the number found to be excluded at the last inspection.
- Students with physical difficulties make good progress because of good support from the specialist resource base. They join their peers in lessons in all subjects.
- A proportion of teaching is high quality and in these classes, students make excellent progress.
- More-able students make faster progress than others.
- The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of students is strong.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 38 teaching sessions or parts of sessions delivered by 36 teachers. Two teaching observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work in a range of subjects, records of their progress, the standards they had attained, and records of their attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors talked to students in class, to groups formally and informally around school, and during a visit to the school's farm. An inspector talked on the telephone with two parents and took into account the 150 responses on Parent View (Ofsted's on-line questionnaire for parents).
- Inspectors took into account 33 questionnaires completed by staff expressing their views about the school.
- Inspectors also held discussions with the headteacher, a number of senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school's external improvement partner, a group of middle leaders and a number of teachers.
- Inspectors also looked carefully at a number of documents relating to school leaders' evaluation of the school's work, their plans for the future, how leaders work to keep pupils safe and how leaders are working to improve teaching and students' progress.

## Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Doyle	Additional Inspector
Royston Halford	Additional Inspector
Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Stanley High School is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportions of students who are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for the pupil premium is slightly lower than average. (The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion of students speak English as an additional language.
- An average proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported at school action. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The school has specialist resourced provision for physically disabled students. Currently, there are very few students supported by this provision.
- A small proportion of students follow English, mathematics, science and vocational courses away from the school site at the Impact Centre, Preston North End Football Club, Everton Academy and the Oakfield Centre. A very small proportion of students also attend work placements for some of the school week.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- There have been considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection. A number of teachers, and senior and subject leaders, have recently been appointed.
- The school has been designated as a Mathematics Centre of Excellence by Edge Hill University as a result of the partnership-working to improve mathematics in the school. Leaders and teachers are also working closely with Penwortham Priory Academy to improve teaching and the curriculum.

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

- Eradicate the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, so more students make faster progress by:
  - improving teacher explanations so students working from the lowest starting points understand clearly what they are to learn and are able to complete tasks and activities that improve their progress and build their confidence
  - teachers planning teaching so that all students, including those eligible for pupil premium funding and those eligible for free school meals, are involved and interested in their learning through well-structured tasks and probing questions
  - making more consistent use of marking to assess students' learning and to inform them about how to improve their work.
- Improve leadership by:
  - ensuring that the curriculum is further developed to meet the needs of all groups in the school so that students reach higher standards in all their subjects and courses
  - ensuring that middle leaders, including those appointed more recently, rapidly implement their plans to improve teaching in subjects
  - presenting a clear picture in the school's self-evaluation summary of the strengths and weaknesses in students' performance, so actions can be taken rapidly by all leaders and teachers to remove inconsistencies in students' performance.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Although effective steps had been taken in 2013 to reduce the inconsistencies in teaching and achievement, leaders, managers and governors did not sustain the improvements and teaching and achievement in 2014 were inconsistent across subjects.
- In 2014, there was unprecedented absence of key teachers and leaders who were central to maintaining the pace of improvement in 2013. As a result, the improvements seen in 2013 were not sustained. In addition, a number of additional key teachers and subject leaders were appointed only recently and they have not yet had chance to fully implement their plans to improve teaching.
- In 2013, senior leaders improved the accuracy of assessments and the recording of progress so the school knew which students were making good or better progress, and which students were falling behind. However, many of the students falling behind were disadvantaged students and students supported by pupil premium funding.
- In 2014, the use of improved assessments to plan teaching so that all students made progress, and to make sure the curriculum was well matched to students' interests, skills and abilities, was inconsistent. Leaders are now beginning to recover lost ground and to share assessments more consistently to reduce the variability in teaching and the curriculum.
- The school's evaluation of its work does not always identify clearly all the areas, including aspects of teaching that still need to improve further. There was insufficient review of the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of students who had been supported. Governors and the headteacher have begun to remedy this and are looking more closely at whether the support is effective for all students eligible for the support.
- The school extended the curriculum in 2013 in order to offer students a wider choice of subjects and qualifications. However, some courses did not meet the needs of students fully, and this contributed to the decline in standards in some subjects in 2014. Leaders and managers are working with a nearby high achieving school to review and improve the curriculum further, so that all students have the chance to achieve high standards in a range of subjects. The school farm offers students the chance to follow animal care courses in school and some students are keen to move on to agricultural college as result of their work on the farm.
- Information and advice is given to students from Year 9 to Year 11 through assemblies, special careers events, through interviews with careers advisers from Year 10 and through the curriculum. Students' awareness of the opportunities available to them, and the qualifications they need, are improving. Information for Year 8 students is currently less comprehensive.
- The very few students in the school with physical difficulties benefit from the school's well-led resource base and are able to access all lessons and make progress along with their peers. They have additional specialist support in the resource base to meet their particular needs.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and understanding is good and is helping to prepare children and young people for life in modern Britain. In lessons they talk confidently about current issues in the Middle East, the recent referendum in Scotland, and different religions and ways of life generally. Regular assemblies and visiting theatre groups demonstrate the school's 'Respect Promise'. New Year 7 students talk about how they help each other if they can.
- The arrangements to manage staff performance are rigorous. Teachers have welcomed clear targets closely related to their teaching. Governors support the headteacher and senior leaders well to ensure that teaching that improves student progress is rewarded.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line (Parent View) survey agreed that their child was safe and well cared for. A small minority expressed a view that the school did not always communicate with them as well as it might, and although most would recommend the school to others, a proportion would not.
- School reports for parents are clear and show progress across subjects. Although the reports explains the assessment system for Key Stage 3, it does not give parents guidance about the progress students need to make in order to attain national standards by the time they are 16.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has provided well-targeted support for leaders of English, mathematics and science. The school's work with Edge Hill University contributed to the improvements to achievement in mathematics in 2013 and the school gained the Mathematics Centre of Excellence award. Although the improvements were not sustained in 2014, the pace of improvement to achievement and teaching in mathematics has started to quicken again.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides good support to school leaders. The increasing expertise gained from governors' training means they also challenge the headteacher and other leaders well. Governing Body meeting records show evidence of the rigorous approach to reviewing of the headteacher's recommendations on teachers' pay progression. Governors are well informed about students' achievement and progress through the improved assessment and tracking information. Information about teaching does not always give governors as clear a picture as they need in order to understand what aspects of teaching need to improve. Governors are clear about how pupil premium funding is spent and are now asking for more information to demonstrate its impact.

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

- The behaviour of students is good. It is not yet outstanding because not all students show interest and enthusiasm for learning. Students move around the school calmly and get on well with each other and with staff. They behave well in lessons, answering questions and giving their views confidently. Particularly noteworthy is the prompt response to teachers' requests to tidy up the classroom after the lesson and put all equipment away. Classrooms are always tidy and very little litter is seen around school. Generally, students take very good care of their books, take pride in their work and work well with each other.
- The school has introduced new systems to reward good work and behaviour. These are understood by students, who say that the merit points given in lessons for particular effort are worth earning. This was less so for older students, who can see more readily that working hard now will improve their future chances in school and beyond.
- Students' attendance has continued to improve and the number of students persistently absent has reduced. However, there remain some groups of students who are more likely to be absent than others and follow-up to remedy this is prompt. Far fewer students than at the last inspection are excluded from school and any who may be at risk of exclusion are supported in the school's base.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in and around school. They are very clear about how social networks and mobile phones can be misused and know not to give their personal details when using these networks.
- Students spoken to said the best things about the school are the way in which staff help them and the sports activities available after school. They say bullying is rare. School records show there are very few instances of name-calling and derogatory language used between students. Students know the actions that will be taken in the event of behaviour that is less than good. Individual students make good progress in improving their behaviour as a result of good support.
- Arrangements for ensuring the safety of students involved in off-site provision or activities are thorough.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because, although there is some high quality teaching across subjects, there is still too much inconsistency which impedes students' progress over time.
- On some occasions, explanations are overly complicated and subject terminology is used which confuses and distracts students. When they come to practise what they have been taught, they are unsure how to proceed. Tasks are not always completed and their confidence remains fragile.
- Teaching does not always interest and engage some groups of students, including disadvantaged students and those students eligible for the pupil premium. When their concentration wanes, their slower progress is not always noticed by some teachers and teaching is not always adjusted to regain their interest.
- Good teaching that was seen during the inspection, and that was evident in the school's records of teaching, is characterised by purposeful succession of well-planned tasks and explanations that take students carefully through the steps in their learning, giving them enough practice with each step so they are confident to go on to the next task. For example, in a mathematics lesson, a student 'taught' the class by standing at the front and working through a problem with all the students following the process. The students asked questions and the 'teacher' explained his answers.
- In some lessons, teachers have extremely high expectations of what students can achieve. Teachers check that students are developing their understanding and use this to provide extra challenge. When this happens, the students show a keenness to learn which, in turn, raises their aspirations further. In an English lesson, the teacher's questioning challenged students to think more deeply about how being a hero was not easy. They were asked to find a quotation from a poem which supported this view. They were then asked to find a poem from one studied which exemplified the statement 'There are causes

worth dying for but none worth killing for'. This contributed well to their moral, spiritual and cultural development.

- The quality of marking is inconsistent. In some books, teachers comment on students' work, or suggest a small practice task, and use the students' response to the suggestion to build their knowledge and confidence. In others, marking does not clearly assess students' learning, tell them how well they are doing or show how they went wrong.
- Students who spoke with inspectors said that homework is rigorous in most subjects in Year 7, but begins to reduce towards Year 8. Homework seen in some students' books was carefully marked and included a real challenge. However, this was not consistently the case.
- Some teachers whose students regularly make good or better progress are used to coach and support others. External training programmes that aim to help teachers to improve their practice, whatever their starting points, are offered. These steps have led to improvement, but this is not yet consistent across the school.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good across subjects. Students enter the school with attainment that is in line with schools nationally, but not all are still attaining these standards when they leave. Not enough students achieve as well as they can. Because of this, the school is not fully promoting equality of opportunity.
- In 2014, attainment in art, French, history, mathematics and RE declined. Students, particularly students with the lowest starting points and students supported by pupil premium funding, made slower progress as a result of the variable quality of teaching.
- On average, disadvantaged students and those supported by pupil premium funding attained standards two thirds of a grade lower than other students in the school in English and in mathematics, and also attained standards in these subjects two thirds of a grade lower than disadvantaged students nationally.
- Work seen in students' books showed steady progress for most students and good progress for some. There were some instances of only a small amount of work being completed and evidence that much help had been given. Students are taught in groups according to ability. Overall, students in higher ability sets make faster progress than others.
- Teaching assistants do too much for students on occasions, but this happens when teaching has not been effective in developing students' understanding. They have good relationships with students and motivate those with difficulties to settle well in lessons.
- More-able students attain in line with similar students nationally. They make good progress towards achieving the higher grades in English. They improved their progress in mathematics in 2014 and the majority attained the higher grades.
- The number of students entered for GCSE examinations in mathematics and English before the end of Year 11 has reduced significantly and few are disadvantaged as a result, because they are able to pursue higher grades later in the year.
- School leaders set the same expectations for the progress of students with physical disabilities who are supported by the resource base. They make steady progress towards their targets as a result of the good support they receive.
- Support funded by the Year 7 catch-up funding to improve literacy skills is good and enables students having difficulty in reading to improve. Most teachers refer to key subject terminology in lessons and take steps to make sure students know what they mean and how to spell them.
- Students attending courses away from the school site make good progress, because the courses motivate them to revisit their learning and tackle their work more successfully.

## 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>	104944
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	442323

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>	723
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jayne Molyneux
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edward Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 228940
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