

Penwortham Girls' High School

Cop Lane, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0SR

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2104

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding. The progress of students in English, mathematics and science and a wide range of other subjects has improved rapidly and is outstanding. Attainment is significantly above average by the end of Year 11.
- Teachers have very high expectations and so teaching is of a consistently high quality. Students are challenged by the work they are given and make rapid and sustained progress as a result.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, managers and governors provide outstanding leadership. There is a relentless focus on the quality of teaching, the personal development of students and on their achievement. This has led to the strong improvement in the overall effectiveness of the school since its previous inspection.
- Leaders at all levels are actively involved in driving still more improvement in teaching and achievement. Subject leadership is highly effective.
- Parents, staff and students have exceptionally positive views of the quality of education the school provides.
- Students feel very safe and cared for in an exceptionally supportive environment. Staff are as concerned for students' personal well-being as they are about their academic success.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Students are extremely considerate of others, courteous, have excellent relationships with each other as well as adults and are very happy at school. They show a deep interest in learning, are keen to do well and this has a significant impact on their progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding, and is a major factor in students feeling well prepared for their next phase in education and for life in modern Britain.
- The marking and feedback teachers give are of a high standard. Even so, new guidance for these, introduced in September and designed to accelerate still further students' learning, is not yet followed by all teachers.
- The less able students achieve well, but their rate of progress is not as rapid as other students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 part lessons, three of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They also undertook a series of shorter observations as they walked around the school, including on the behaviour and attitudes of students.
- Discussions were held with: the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with students in lessons and around the school during the change over in lessons, break and lunchtimes. They also spoke formally to three groups of students about their experiences at the school and the education they receive.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed policies, school self-evaluation and improvement planning, monitoring and performance documents, safeguarding information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about students' progress and samples of students' work.
- Inspectors took account of 73 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 52 responses to the staff inspection survey. In addition, inspectors took into account responses to the school's own survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Edwin De Middelaer, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Marie Cordey	Additional Inspector
Royston Halford	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Penwortham Girls' High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, with no sixth form.
- Most students are of White British heritage. There is a larger than average proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is lower than the national average for secondary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are supported through pupil premium funding is lower than average. Pupil premium is additional funding to provide support for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- There are a few students who receive their education at a pupil referral unit, Shaftsbury High School.
- The school is part of the South Ribble Learning Federation and a strategic partner in the Ripley Teaching School Alliance.
- 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?

- Raise achievement even further by:
 - ensuring that the work set for less able students is matched even more closely to their abilities so that they make the same rapid progress as other students
 - ensuring that new marking and feedback procedures are adopted by all staff so students are helped even more successfully to improve their work and to know how well they are doing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Senior leaders and governors, led by the headteacher, have established a culture of ambition and high expectation, along with a great desire for continuous improvement. They have a very clear vision for the school which staff and students embrace. This has created an exceptionally positive ethos and climate for learning. As a result, students' progress and behaviour are outstanding and they show excellent attitudes to learning.
- Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and the performance of students. Leaders are highly skilled at working with staff to develop teaching which captures students' interest and which accelerates their learning so they make rapid progress. The rigorous monitoring of teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, ensures that all staff are held to account for students' achievement.
- Middle leadership is focused, strategic, knowledgeable and committed to the school's ethos. These leaders model high standards through their work and also have the highest aspirations for the school and its students. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and show a comprehensive understanding of what they are expected to do to help the school to improve further. This, combined with the drive of senior leaders and the improvements made since the previous inspection, means the school has excellent capacity for sustained improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. Leaders work constantly to improve still further the quality of teaching through rigorous monitoring of performance and the impact of professional development for all staff. A robust system of performance management ensures that all teachers are clear about their professional objectives and are given appropriate development to help to achieve them. All objectives are linked to school priorities and to improving teaching still further. There is a clear understanding that pay progression is linked to improved teaching, leadership and achievement.
- A wide range of professional development opportunities are provided for staff to improve their performance. Staff are very appreciative of this tailored approach, as well as of the school's professional development programmes. In history, for example, one teacher commented on how professional development on co-operative learning and assessment had a significant impact on teaching and students' progress.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of students in developing their basic skills and making the best of their individual talents. It has a significant impact on achievement and also in developing the interests of students. It provides excellent opportunities for academic education and personal development. There are many additional opportunities for students to develop further their interests and skills, so students enjoy a very wide range of experiences. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education or training due to the high quality of their academic and personal skills. The curriculum provides many engaging opportunities for students to explore the values of tolerance, democracy and other elements which prepare them particularly well for life in modern Britain.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength and is outstanding. It is strongly promoted through the culture of the school and relationships between staff and students as well as through the high-quality curriculum. It plays a key role within the firmly established ethos of the school and promotes tolerance and understanding among students. It is an important element in how the school promotes equal opportunities for all students and in ensuring excellent relationships between members of the school community.
- Careers advice and guidance are highly effective in supporting the ambitions of students and highlighting the opportunities for students at the age of 16. Students are appreciative of this and value the advice given, which helps them to make informed choices about their future at the end of Year 11.
- School leaders value highly the views of parents and students. They canvass opinions throughout the year and these influence decisions on how to improve the school. Leaders take appropriate action to work with parents to support their child's education.
- There is very effective use of the pupil premium funding. Leaders use it in a variety of ways to increase the support given to disadvantaged students, to help accelerate their learning, raise their attendance and increase their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The school reaches out very well to its local community. There are regular events which involve students from the school and local primary schools, for example. Parents are encouraged to take part in opportunities for learning such as their 'families first' provision and the focus on family learning.
- Leaders check meticulously on the attendance and progress of students at the off-site provision.
- There is good use of external support offered by the local authority. School leaders also make a significant

and wide-ranging contribution in support of the wider school system by working with other schools locally and the local authority to improve educational outcomes and provision.

- Leaders have established safeguarding procedures which protect and ensure the safety of students. These meet government requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are extremely well organised and focused upon the school's performance. They are very clear about their remit and are well inducted and trained. Governors work very effectively alongside leaders to contribute to, and monitor, the school's improvement.
- Governors are very clear about the school's strengths and areas for development. They are diligent in holding all leaders to account. They ask astute questions and support and challenge leaders well. Governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing through analysing data about students' comparative achievement and by acquiring a detailed knowledge about the quality of teaching. They work with leaders towards further improvement. They are active in the performance management of teachers and in deciding on salary progression, rewarding those who perform well. Governors have been involved in addressing any underperformance in teaching.
- Governors manage the school's resources very well and have excellent controls and procedures to ensure good financial planning, probity and sustainability. This leads to effective deployment of resources which link clearly to school improvement. They check the impact of spending, including pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They settle quickly into lessons and readily cooperate with teachers when asked to perform any learning activities. They show consistently excellent attitudes to learning which create in them a strong desire to achieve outstandingly well and to do their very best. This has a powerful impact on their learning. Students come to lessons well equipped for learning. Low-level disruption is extremely rare and the systems to manage behaviour are very effective and consistently applied by staff.
- Outstanding behaviour is also evident outside lessons, such as before school, at break and lunchtime, as well as at the change of lessons. Students are very courteous, considerate and polite to each other and to adults. There is an established culture of positive relationships and respect for others, which students adopt readily. Students respond quickly to any staff instructions. They have very positive views about the school, are happy and take pride in the school.
- Students are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. For instance, they learn about justice, democracy and respect for others in lessons and assemblies. In a Year 11 discussion about citizenship, for example, students were actively involved in debating about authority, power and influence within society.
- Parents, students and staff have very positive views about the standard of behaviour in the school. There is very little bullying or discrimination and, on the very rare occasion these happen, they are dealt with both swiftly and effectively.
- Students with special educational needs or who most are in need benefit greatly from the school's learning support team. They are extremely well cared for and receive highly effective support for their academic and personal development.
- Students have many opportunities to develop leadership and take on further responsibilities. These can be through the student council, as a prefect or by taking a leading part in after-school activities. These prepare students extremely well for the next phase of their education.
- Attendance is now above average and persistent absence is well below average. The school has a strong focus on attendance and on improving students' attendance still further. Strategies introduced recently to raise the attendance of disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs have produced a rapid rise in the attendance of these students.
- Students who are educated at off-site provision behave well in the pupil referral unit.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Safety is highlighted in lessons so that students are fully aware of any risk, and is comprehensively covered in citizenship and personal, health and social education (SPACE) lessons. In Year 7, students discuss, for example, what types of bullying there are, how to recognise these, the effects each have and how to deal with them. All parents who

responded to Parent View stated that they felt their child was safe at school. Students also state how safe they feel anywhere on the school site.

- The school's systems and structures ensure all aspects of safety are taken very seriously through robust assessment of risk and frequent monitoring. Leaders, staff and governors have a strong emphasis on safeguarding, and site security. All staff who work with students are fully trained in safeguarding and identifying students at risk of harm. The school works closely with other agencies to ensure students are safe and supported very well.
- Students understand what risks are and how to keep themselves safe, whether this is linked to using the internet or about the misuse of substances. The school also promotes this awareness with parents to help them identify any risks and so contribute to preventing them.
- In off-site provision, leaders work with staff at a pupil referral unit to ensure there are procedures in place to keep students safe.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The rapid progress that students in all year groups make in almost all subjects across the school shows that the quality of teaching over time is outstanding. As a result, students attain high standards from their starting points on entry to the school.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all students, and this has produced a culture geared towards success and excellence in achievement throughout the school. Students are very aware of this, and are enthusiastic learners who are interested and keen to reach the highest challenges set for them. Teaching assistants are deployed well and are highly effective in supporting students who have special needs to achieve well.
- Teachers are meticulous in helping students of all abilities to learn successfully, reflect on this learning and so deepen their understanding as well as to consolidate what they have learned. Teachers encourage good answers which show the depth of students' understanding, particularly in discussions with other students.
- The most able are constantly challenged and higher order work is expected of them. Consequently, almost all students are able to apply knowledge and skills exceptionally well. For example, in Year 7 mathematics, students' learning is extended by real-life use of percentages. This deepens their understanding of calculating percentages and helps with their interpretation of data. Students give views on the rates of savings and loans, and learn how important it is to understand these. They assess each other's work and give feedback on how to improve.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge makes learning interesting. Students are, therefore, highly engrossed in their learning and take full responsibility for it. Teachers use their knowledge well and adapt it when appropriate to accelerate learning. They are aware of students who need support in their lessons and regularly check the understanding of these students to challenge them still further.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is an important focus. It is highly effective and has an excellent impact on students' learning and progress. In Year 11 product design, the focus was firmly on literacy and numeracy skills. The activities supported students' work through links to economics, advertising and the issues of market forces.
- Teaching develops students' self-confidence in their ability to learn. There are many instances of students working co-operatively in groups or with partners to extend their learning and that of others. Students' understanding is checked frequently to ensure that they know how to improve their work and that they are doing so during the task.
- Feedback from teachers' marking and assessment is of high quality and is a major factor in students' rapid progress. It supports students' awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve and reach the targets set for them. Even so, leaders have introduced an improved policy for marking and feedback. They recognise that it is important for this to be embedded consistently across the school in order to accelerate students' progress still further.
- Homework is set regularly and students complete it to a very high standard. It reinforces what has already been learned, deepens students' understanding and also stretches their thinking and their application of skills and understanding. It is marked regularly and has a good impact on learning.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is average overall and they make rapid and sustained progress over time. Attainment in GCSE in almost all subjects has been consistently and significantly above average from 2011. Inspection evidence shows that students' performance continues to be well above average overall and that they continue to make rapid progress.
- Detailed checks on students' achievement ensure that most students receive the support they need to achieve exceptionally well. Current data show that this rapid progress is sustained in the current academic year and that most students are on track to achieve their challenging targets.
- Achievement and progress in English and mathematics are particularly strong. This is also the case in almost all other subjects including science, languages and humanities, where high achievement has been a feature over time. As a result, students develop the skills and knowledge they need to do outstandingly well and apply these accurately. Students are very ready for the next phase of their education.
- Normally, the progress made by disadvantaged students is as rapid as that of non-disadvantaged students in the school and better than other students nationally. This means that there is usually no gap in attainment. In 2014, there was a small number of disadvantaged students, many of whom had complex needs. Published GCSE school data show that disadvantaged students attained a quarter of a grade lower in English and one grade lower in mathematics in comparison to other students in the school. When compared to other students nationally, there was no gap in attainment in English and the gap in attainment in mathematics was one grade lower. School data for the current Year 11 students' show that disadvantaged students are back on track to make equally rapid progress when compared to other students in the school and that the gap in attainment in 2014 is already closing. School leaders make sure that there is first-class support through the pupil premium funding for these students.
- Over time, the small number of students who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress. The curriculum is well matched to their needs and they are supported effectively to achieve well. School leaders are aware that these students are not making outstanding progress. This is because work for these students is not always matched well enough to their abilities when they are part of a mixed-ability group. Leaders are focused on improving still further the progress of these students to match the rapid progress of other students in the school.
- The most able students make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and across almost all subjects. This is because of the highly effective teaching they receive. A member of the leadership team oversees their progress and opportunities for taking part in appropriate experiences out of lessons, ensuring a continuing focus on these students achieving at the highest possible levels.
- A few students were entered early for GCSE mathematics in 2014. School leaders believed this experience would be beneficial for them. They were then re-entered in the summer. There were no most able students in this group.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make similarly rapid progress from their different starting points as other students due to the high-quality support they receive.
- There is a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects as evident in students' work. Excellent use of literacy was observed in almost all lessons. Students read frequently in school in a wide range of contexts. Numeracy skills support practical work in subjects such as design technology, science and computing. Excellent use of numeracy was also seen in English where students used spider diagrams in their work.
- Students identified as needing additional support in literacy and numeracy through the Year 7 'catch-up' funding, when they move from primary school, make significant and rapid progress in enhancing their skills. This support continues in Year 8 and there is also support for the students who need additional help, both at lunchtime and after school.
- Students who attend off-site provision at the pupil referral unit make good progress over time.

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	119765
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	449110

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	674
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorimer Russell-Hayes
Headteacher	Karen Pomeroy
Date of previous school inspection	29 May 2012
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