

Maghull High School

Ormonde Drive, Maghull, Liverpool, Merseyside, L31 7AW

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The progress that students make is not yet good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, or in humanities.
- The most able students do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects.
- There is some variation in the quality of feedback to students from teachers' marking because the school's marking policy is not consistently implemented by all staff.
- Questioning is not always used effectively to check students' understanding and challenge their thinking.
- The poor behaviour of a very small number of younger students in lessons is not well managed by some teachers resulting in some inadequate teaching.
- Governors do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the impact of the individual initiatives funded by the pupil premium.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in mathematics has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now close to the national average.
- Disadvantaged students achieve almost as well as other students in the school.
- Students are supported, encouraged and cared for very well. The school is recognised by students, staff and parents as a safe place.
- Students are friendly and welcoming; they treat each other and adults with respect and behave responsibly around the school.
- The recently expanded leadership team is successfully driving improvements in the school's work. Teaching is well led and managed. Middle leaders have a good understanding of their part in improving the quality of teaching.
- The school is responsive to issues identified in achievement data. Current initiatives relating to improving questioning and feedback are aimed at accelerating the progress of the most able.
- The sixth form provision is good, offering a range of academic and vocational courses that meets students' needs and interests well. The sixth form is increasingly popular and the number of students on roll is rising.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 lessons, including six joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, learning and pastoral managers, teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Schools Adviser with the Leadership in North and Central Sefton (LiNCS) school improvement cluster of local schools.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the student council and other groups of students from each key stage, listened to students read and spoke with students in lessons, at break time and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors checked work in students’ books and looked at a range of documents relating to students’ progress over time, the school’s view of its own performance, improvement planning and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school’s own analysis of questionnaire responses from over 250 parents during the past year and the 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Blaylock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Addison	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Maghull High School is larger than the average-sized high school. It converted to academy status in October 2011.
- Sixth form students are part of a consortium with two other local schools.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of students are White British. Hence, the proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language are much lower than those typically found.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-below average.
- The school's Phoenix Centre provides support from counsellors for students with health problems or social and emotional difficulties.
- Although some students come from the immediate locality, over one-third of students travel to the school from the neighbouring local authorities of Liverpool and Knowsley.
- A total of six Year 10 and Year 11 students access vocational courses for two days a week as part of a mixed timetable arrangement. The level 2 courses currently being studied include: hair and beauty at Hugh Baird College; construction at the Cornerstones vocational centre; and a motor vehicle course, equivalent to four GCSEs, through the Hugh Baird young apprenticeship programme.
- 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?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to eliminate inadequate teaching, raise achievement especially in English, mathematics, science and humanities and accelerate the progress of all students, including the most able, by:
 - teachers using probing questioning in class to check students' understanding and challenge their thinking to help them achieve a secure grasp of the subjects they study
 - full implementation of the school's marking policy by all staff, with sufficient opportunity for students' reflection and response to teachers' comments
 - all staff sharing the same high aspirations to enable students to strive for the very highest grades they are capable of achieving
 - increasing the proportions of students who make more rapid progress in English and mathematics
 - sharing the best practice within the school.
- Improve the poor behaviour in some Key Stage 3 lessons by reducing the disruptive impact of a very small number of younger students through:
 - ensuring that all teachers develop the necessary skills to effectively control and manage instances of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour in lessons
 - consistent application of the school's sanctions, systematically supported and followed through

by those with leadership responsibilities.

- Ensure that senior leaders and governors are better informed and have a more detailed understanding of the impact of the individual programmes funded by the pupil premium on the achievement of disadvantaged students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students enter the school with standards in English and mathematics that are significantly higher than the national average. Students are now making better progress than previously in most subjects, but more rapid progress is needed, particularly in English, mathematics, science and humanities for their achievement to be good.
- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE grades at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, rose significantly to 60% in 2012, which was above the national average. Poor results in English in 2013 (following a change in examination entry) meant this figure dropped to 52%. Projections for current Year 11 students suggest that this will rise again to above 60% for this year.
- Recent examination results also show considerable variation in the progress students made in the different subjects they studied. For example, students who followed courses in drama and Spanish made good progress to achieve excellent results. However, this was not the case elsewhere: not enough students reached the higher GCSE grades of A and A* and progress was poor in science and humanities subjects. The school has recognised this issue and is looking to raise aspirations and achievement through more probing questioning to challenge and extend the thinking and understanding of students.
- Students' communication and literacy skills are good, although few students were able to talk to inspectors about their current reading books. An accelerated reading scheme has been introduced but there is scope for more active promotion and encouragement of reading for pleasure. Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to help weaker readers to improve their skills.
- Since the last inspection standards have risen in mathematics. The school's tracking systems indicate that students are now making better progress in English and mathematics throughout the school although there is still need to accelerate this further.
- Students have been entered early for GCSE mathematics with the option of further entry to improve their grade or to do extension work in preparation for Advanced level courses. While this has worked well for many students, the proportions making above-expected progress and securing the highest GCSE grades have been low.
- The gaps between the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and their peers are smaller than those typically found. The students eligible for this funding make good progress such that in English, their attainment was on average one quarter of a GCSE grade lower than that of their peers, whereas in mathematics it was less than one fifth below that of their peers, in 2013.
- The vocational courses offered as alternative off-site provision are well matched to the needs and interests of the students involved. Close checks are kept on the progress these students are making.
- Students with disabilities or a statement of special educational needs and those identified as requiring support by school action plus make mostly better progress than their peers and achieve well across the range of subjects they study.
- All students follow the GCSE religious studies course which is taught well, but on a reduced timetable; consequently GCSE results in religious studies are lower than those normally found. The school is committed to this course as part of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and in preparation for Advanced level where students' achievement in religious studies is good.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and shows an improving trend in both academic and vocational courses. Students achieve particularly well in drama, travel and tourism and media studies.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching ranges from inadequate to outstanding. Teaching is better in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than in Key Stage 3 and, although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet good overall. This was confirmed by first-hand observation, the work seen in students' books, and the school's own judgements from lesson observations, which were endorsed through inspectors' joint observations with senior leaders.
- In Years 7 and 8 some teachers lack the skills to handle poor behaviour and do not tackle inappropriate behaviour when it occurs. At times the work provided for these students is not sufficiently challenging or interesting enough to help them learn well. This results in disruption by a small number of students who shout out and talk when they should be listening to teachers' explanations.
- In some lessons students are not clear about what they are expected to learn. Consequently, students check their own understanding in a superficial way that is not effective in supporting their learning.
- The school has prioritised the use of more probing questioning to challenge and extend the thinking and understanding of students but questioning is not yet effectively used by all teachers to check students' understanding.
- Teachers know students well and are keen to help them improve. Relationships are positive and, when required, students collaborate very well; for example in drama and music lessons.
- Good practice is evident in the marking of students' work in English. A common marking policy encourages teachers to identify the strengths of students' work and how it could be further improved. However, this is not securely established practice with all staff or across all subjects.
- In the sixth form, students make outstanding progress in lessons where they are confident to ask questions to clarify key points and where teachers display expert subject knowledge.
- The school is committed to exploiting new technologies and is researching their impact in trialling the use of pocket-sized tablets with all Year 7 and Year 8 students. This aims to promote students' reading and give good internet access throughout the school and at home; it is proving popular with students. In mathematics, good learning was seen when students were using the same graphic calculator model supported by software emulating the machine projected from the teacher's computer.
- Good support is provided for students with a statement of special educational needs both in class from teachers and teaching assistants and also in the school's Phoenix Centre.
- The evidence from responses in Parent View and the school's own questionnaires is that parents agree with the comment that their children are taught well and their responses show increasing satisfaction as students progress through the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Most students treat each other, their teachers and other adults with respect. The vast majority are friendly and polite and conduct themselves sensibly and responsibly when moving around the school and during break and lunchtimes. Attractive posters and stimulating quotes enhance the otherwise mostly uninspiring accommodation.
- One member of staff's comment that 'behaviour is good overall but the behaviour of a tiny minority of antisocial students is not dealt with rapidly enough' provides an accurate description of behaviour in the school. The instances of poor behaviour observed during the inspection were in lessons that involved younger students from Key Stage 3. However behaviour is good in most classrooms and the majority of students have positive attitudes to learning.
- Students' behaviour improves as they progress through the school reflecting both increasing maturity and the success of the school in instilling appropriate patterns of behaviour. Form period activities are more successful with older year groups.
- The behaviour of sixth form students is good, although in some lessons students could show more initiative in asking questions to secure their understanding and take greater responsibility

for their learning. Students are very positive about their sixth form experience and the support provided by their teachers. They have positive attitudes to learning, make a good contribution to the school in willingly supporting younger students and engage well with a wide range of enrichment and voluntary activities.

- Students gain confidence when working together in subjects such as drama. They learn and improve together when they reflect on and discuss their work with each other, as seen in information and communication technology.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Good care is provided by staff. They know students well and have good links with parents and an understanding of students' home circumstances. One appreciative mother described the help and support she and her child had received as 'absolutely fantastic'. Students commented, 'Teachers would never refuse to help you.'
- Students also appreciate the good care and support provided by peer mentors. The trained peer mentors are available at break-times in the Phoenix Centre to assist their fellow students should problems arise that they are more willing to share with their peers rather than adults.
- Bullying and prejudice in its various forms are well understood by students through assemblies and religious studies. Any instances are addressed and swiftly resolved.
- Work done to achieve the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting School Award' means that students have a good understanding of their rights to an education, to be included, to be heard, to a clean and healthy environment and to participate. This is evidence of the school's good promotion of equal opportunities.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and the governing body are strongly committed to accelerating improvements. A larger senior leadership team with clear identification of leadership roles and responsibilities has been established to secure this. Steady improvement has been achieved despite serious challenges since the last inspection with changes in personnel, some staff intransigence, and the death in service of a member of the leadership team.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and has helped leaders to identify key priorities to drive improvements. The capacity of the leadership team, including middle leaders, to achieve more rapid improvements in the school, is also seen in the effective addressing of the staffing issues. Leaders have accurately identified important priorities, such as accelerating the progress of the most able. Additionally they have improved the quality of teaching through the appointment of key teachers in some subject areas and through the school's strong commitment to continuing professional development. This is reflected in rising levels of achievement in subjects such as mathematics.
- Good systems have been established, involving subject leaders and support staff, to track students' progress and improve the involvement of parents and students. Consequently, all leaders are more aware of students' progress and any barriers to learning are addressed at an early stage.
- The performance management of teaching is increasingly effective with greater rigour in checking against national Teachers' Standards and a strong link between teachers' performance and salary progression. Robust systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are now more accountable for their students' achievement and this is checked closely by middle leaders.
- The school provides comprehensive support for students moving from their primary schools to Maghull High School with a particular focus on literacy and mathematics, strong links with parents and good support for vulnerable students. Summer schools effectively target disadvantaged students and those who are the only ones moving to Maghull from their primary schools.
- The sixth form is well led and managed, although the sixth form improvement plan, while accurate in its evaluation, is not sufficiently detailed in some areas to rapidly drive

improvements.

- Any underperformance by sixth form students in particular subjects is critically reviewed and challenged with targeted support plans for underachieving subjects both in Maghull and the other schools in the collaboration.
- The rationale for the school's good curriculum is well-founded with exemplary practice in reviewing and developing the subjects offered that fully involves subject leaders.
- GCSE courses start in Year 9 following option choices in Year 8 that involve detailed dialogue between staff, students and parents with a broad range of available choices. Parental feedback on this has been very positive.
- The curriculum in the sixth form is good and well matched to the needs and interests of students with a good balance of academic and vocational courses. It includes a well-conceived enrichment programme that caters for a wide range of interests alongside a tutor programme that provides good support for numeracy, literacy, life skills and study skills. Good guidance is given to students both before and during the sixth form which takes account of the demands of the various subjects.
- At the time of the inspection, there was an Anne Frank exhibition in the school library: further evidence of the good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that prepares students well for adult life.
- The LiNCS adviser is a good friend to the school who knows the school well and has helped the school develop its self-evaluation well through collaboration with neighbouring schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and provide strong direction and good challenge in meeting their statutory duties. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and hold the headteacher to account well regarding all aspects of the school. Governors have a broad range of expertise and experience, including financial awareness and a good knowledge of the community that the school serves. They understand and execute their performance management responsibilities well to promote, recognise and reward improvements in teaching, leadership and management. They know about the use of pupil premium funding and its overall impact in general terms, but lack a detailed understanding of the impact of the individual programmes, strategies and activities on which the money has been spent.

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	137520
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	430992

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	1,127
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Howe
Headteacher	Mark Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2012
Telephone number	0844 477 3438
Fax number	0844 477 3439
Email address	school@maghullhigh.com

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