

Sale High School

Norris Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 3JR

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Governors, senior leaders and middle leaders have acted decisively and with tenacity since the previous inspection. This has secured marked improvements in the quality of teaching and in students' achievement.
- Teachers are held to account for the quality of their teaching. As a result, expectations and students' achievement have improved rapidly.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged students and the most able are identified swiftly and timely actions are taken to secure their good progress.
- Teaching is typically good and is ensuring that current students are making good progress in all year groups and in all subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to gain students' interest.
- Students respond well to the activities provided for them and their behaviour in lessons is good.
- Students' behaviour around the school is good. They show respect for one another and take good care of the school's buildings and grounds. They enjoy good relationships with one another and with their teachers.
- The school is relentless in ensuring that students are safe within the school and beyond it. Students say that they feel very safe in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding, so does not ensure that students make exceptionally rapid progress in learning.
- In lessons, the work is not always sufficiently challenging to make sure that all students make the progress of which they are capable. While further work is provided for the most-able students, there are other students in the class who could also undertake this harder work.
- The marking of students' work does not always give them sufficient guidance on how to improve it. Students do not always act on the advice they receive.
- Some students' written work shows weaknesses in their literacy skills, including in the correct use of English grammar. Sometimes, a few students are not helped to express their spoken ideas in detail or with clarity.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons. They observed other activities for shorter periods of time. Four lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at work in students' books.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff and with two groups of students. They spoke to students informally at different times of the school day.
- They also met with three representatives of the governing body, with one representative of the local authority and with a representative of the teaching school which has been working with the school.
- The inspectors took into account the 64 responses to the staff questionnaire and 87 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at information about students' progress; documents relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding; the school's checks on the quality of teaching; its analysis of how well it is doing; and plans for further improvement.

Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most secondary schools.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged is higher than average in comparison with other secondary schools. These are students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- A large majority of students are of White British heritage. Other students come from a wide variety of different ethnic backgrounds. A small proportion of these students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is higher than that found in most schools.
- A small number of students attend courses at Rathbone College, Next Level Learning and Trafford Medical Education Service.
- The school has links with Loreto Grammar School, which is a national teaching school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - the work provided in all lessons is sufficiently challenging for students of all abilities to make the progress of which they are capable
 - all students understand how to improve their work and act upon the teachers' advice in order to increase their rate of progress in learning
 - students' skills in writing and in the correct use of grammar and students' spoken English are developed in all the subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Following the previous inspection, the governors, headteacher and other leaders took decisive and determined action to bring about the marked improvements in the quality of teaching and in students' achievement.
- Leaders, governors and staff are ambitious for the school and their high expectations are shared and understood by the students. Many students hold high aspirations for the future and understand clearly how the activities and subjects they study will help them to achieve these.
- Teachers are held to account for the quality of their teaching. Where teaching is weaker, clear plans and professional development opportunities are put into place to rectify this. Consequently, the performance of staff is managed effectively and, as a result, teaching and students' achievement have improved rapidly. Students make consistently good progress in all year groups and in the different subjects.
- The local authority and the national teaching school have provided good support in this respect. They have also assisted the school in making sure that the checks made on its work are accurate and that suitable plans are in place to make further improvements.
- Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information well to ensure improvements are made for the benefit of the students. For example, following the 2014 GCSE mathematics results, effective steps were taken to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. New staff were appointed to strengthen the team and good quality support in mathematics from a specialist leader in education was brought in. As a result, students are making consistently good progress in mathematics.
- Middle and subject leaders are clear about what needs to be done and about how to do it. They take responsibility for the performance of their departments and are supported well in doing so. They share the senior leaders' ambitions for the school's success and convey this clearly to the staff in their subject areas.
- The school's approach to developing students' reading, writing and speaking is effective and, in general, is implemented well in the different subjects. Provision to help those students falling behind in reading or who have English as an additional language is good and enables these students to make good progress.
- While the school's senior and middle leaders make sure that staff provide good opportunities for students to write in the different subjects, there are times when students' animated and thoughtful discussions are not reflected in their written work. There are examples of this in history and religious education. In contrast, in some other subjects, for example English, students write well and at length but do not always speak clearly or explain their answers in detail.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding and has carefully identified strategies which are proving highly effective in starting to close the gap in attainment and progress between disadvantaged students and others. The progress of each student is checked carefully. The different approaches used are evaluated carefully and continued or ceased according to their effectiveness.
- The good progress which students of all ages and from the different groups are making provides good evidence of the school's effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity. The school has rigorous procedures for monitoring the achievement, attendance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school's good curriculum prepares students well for the future. Students receive effective careers advice and guidance which helps them to make informed choices about their next steps. The school also ensures they have the skills they need to be successful when they go on to continuing education, training or employment, which almost all do. Students are also well prepared, for example through taking on responsibilities in school as volunteers or young leaders.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development most effectively. There are very good opportunities through the curriculum for students to reflect on spiritual and moral issues, for example in religious education. In addition, students learn about issues such as extremism and democracy, and take part in mock elections; these contribute to their good preparation for life in modern Britain. The school tackles discrimination and fosters good relations well.
- The school works well with parents so that the vast majority feel well informed about their child's progress and that the school responds to any concerns they raise.
- The steps taken by the school to safeguard students and to ensure that students understand risks is exemplary. The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet current statutory requirements. Training and guidance for staff are up to date and ensure that all staff are highly vigilant. Staff know the students very well. They are effective in supporting students whose circumstances may make them at risk of harm or who have experienced traumatic events in their lives.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has recently been reconstituted in order to sharpen its focus and to increase its efficiency. The governing body has made a major contribution to the school's improvement since the previous inspection and is committed to raising students' achievement further. Governors have an exceptionally detailed knowledge of the quality of teaching and of what the data in relation to students' attainment and progress show about the school's performance. This is gathered through regular and timely updates from senior leaders and governors add extra scrutiny where this is needed.
- Governors make frequent visits to school to meet with staff and students, to visit lessons and to look at students' work in different subjects. They attend parents' evenings so that parents can speak to them should they so wish.
- The governing body provides good challenge to senior leaders. Governors have a strong track record of ensuring that only good teaching is rewarded and that underperformance is tackled. They make careful checks on whether the pupil premium is used effectively. They adjust how the money is spent if it is not proving effective in raising the achievement of disadvantaged students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. The vast majority of students behave very well in lessons in the different subjects and with different staff and are keen to learn and to succeed. This is helping them to make good progress.
- Students are respectful and courteous to one another and to adults. Relationships between students and with staff are highly positive. Students wear their uniforms with pride.
- Students are usually well prepared for lessons. They bring the right equipment and respond quickly to requests from adults. Work in students' books shows that the majority take a pride in their work and usually present it neatly and carefully.
- Lessons disrupted by inappropriate behaviour are almost unheard of. Almost all students concentrate and maintain their rate of work throughout lessons.
- Students' behaviour around the school at different times of the school day is consistently good. They take good care of the school's buildings and grounds.
- Students' attendance is broadly average. The school has taken effective steps to reduce the number of students arriving late to school in the morning.
- The school admits a large number of students during the school year. Some of these students have come from other schools because of their particular behavioural needs. These students settle very well.
- Overall, there are marked improvements over time for students with particular behavioural needs because of the school's effective actions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- This work is outstanding because the school is highly vigilant in identifying those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable to harm. Staff are highly trained and the school takes its responsibilities very seriously. It undertakes active preventative work with students, for example through the development of resources related to sexual exploitation.
- In addition, all students are highly aware of how to stay safe, such as when using the internet or in relation to finance. They recall the detail of the coverage of this in lessons on 'super-learning' days and in assemblies.
- Students say that they feel very safe in school. Those who met with the inspectors said that bullying is very rare and is dealt with highly effectively. Some students approached the inspectors directly to tell them this. Students have a very clear understanding of what bullying is and of the different forms it may take. They know where to go for help should they need it.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Careful checks are made on the behaviour, attendance and well-being of students who attend lessons away from the school site. The effectiveness of the provision is monitored and considered closely by senior staff.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching across the school is typically good and is supporting students' rising achievement. Teaching is not yet sufficiently outstanding in ensuring that all students make exceptionally rapid progress over time.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge. They have high expectations and show enthusiasm for their subjects. This secures students' interest in the activities provided, extends their knowledge and increases their understanding.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers use all the information available to them about students' prior achievement to plan and provide work which builds on this. Teachers ask probing questions in order to find out what students know and can do. This ensures that students are focused on learning.
- Work for the students is well planned. They are clear as to what they will be learning and when this will be achieved. Further challenges are provided for the most-able students, to which they respond well, and this accelerates their rate of progress. The teaching of the most-able students has improved since the previous inspection, resulting in their higher achievement. However, sometimes a greater number of students are capable of this more difficult work but are not challenged to do it. This slows the rate of progress of some students.
- Students' work is regularly checked and marked and they are often given detailed guidance on how to improve it. Students are encouraged to respond to marking. Where they do so, they make good progress and can explain how the guidance improved their understanding and their work. However, this is inconsistent. The written feedback does not always give clear guidance to students on how to improve their work and students do not always act upon the advice they are given.
- Across the school, regular checks are made on students' progress. This ensures that staff are aware and act quickly when any student is at risk of falling behind in their learning.
- Additional help is provided to those students who need it. As a result, disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged are taught well and make good progress. Teaching assistants also provide effective help to students.
- Reading is taught well and the library is used well by students at lunch and break times. The work in students' books in the different subjects indicates that many are taught to write well, accurately and at length, although they do not always speak clearly or extend their ideas in lessons. For other students, effective questioning in lessons ensures that they can explain their ideas well, although this is not always reflected in their written work. Some staff do not always identify or correct students' grammatical errors in spoken or written English.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved markedly since the previous inspection. This is ensuring students' good progress in the subject.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- The achievement of students has improved strongly since the previous inspection. The school's current students in all year groups are making good progress in the different subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- The majority of students join the school with skills that are a little below average in English and mathematics. They make good progress during their time at the school.
- Students in the current Years 7 to 10 are making consistently good progress against the challenging targets that are set for them in English, mathematics and science. Students' progress is also good in modern languages, history and geography. This is confirmed by the information kept by the school about their progress and by the work in students' books.
- In 2014, the proportion of students at the end of Year 11 gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C fell in comparison with previous years. This can largely be attributed to a sudden decline in the performance of students in the mathematics GCSE. The school tackled this robustly so that the attainment and progress of the current Year 11 students in mathematics is set to rise rapidly. Thorough checks have been made by the school in partnership with external agencies to ensure that these predictions are accurate.
- In contrast, the rate of progress from the start of Year 7 of students in Year 11 in 2014 was significantly above average in science and modern languages and above average in English, so that the school's results in these subjects were above average.
- In Year 11 in 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and other students in the school and nationally was the equivalent of half a GCSE grade in English, but the equivalent of more than one grade in mathematics. The rate of progress of these students was below that of others in the school

and nationally in both English and mathematics.

- The information kept by the school shows that the disadvantaged students in the current Year 11 are making accelerated progress in both English and mathematics. The gap between their attainment and that of others in the school and nationally is expected to reduce to the equivalent of less than half a grade in English and about half a grade in mathematics. Disadvantaged students in the other year groups are also making good progress in the different subjects, including English and mathematics.
- There is no evidence that early entry for GCSE examinations adversely affects students' achievement. Students identified as needing more time to complete the course are not entered until the summer of Year 11.
- A very small number of students attend courses away from the school's site. These courses are proving successful in ensuring that students have a renewed interest in education.
- A number of students join the school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 that are below the expected levels. The extra help that these students receive through the Year 7 catch-up funding is assisting them in making good progress in improving these skills.
- The most-able students make good progress throughout the school because the work which is set for them encourages them to think deeply, to discuss their learning and to produce good amounts of work. Occasionally, the middle-ability students are not challenged to the same degree although they are capable of completing the harder work.
- Students for whom English is an additional language make good progress in the different subjects because of the timely help they receive on joining the school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because careful checks are made on their progress and timely additional help is provided, both within lessons and in small groups.

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	106375
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	462302

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	583
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Williams
Headteacher	Lynn Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2013
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