

The Swinton High School

Sefton Road, Pendlebury, Swinton, Manchester M27 6JU

Inspection dates 10–11 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and his senior leaders provide strong leadership. They have led a very clear school focus on improving pupil progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders know their school well and where it needs to improve. School systems to improve teaching and learning and pupils' progress are effective.
- Teaching is good and improving because teachers are getting better at ensuring that pupils make faster progress. Teachers are increasingly adept at planning their lessons to build on what pupils know and understand and how best they can further develop pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They get down to work quickly and have positive attitudes to learning. They have increasing opportunities to develop themselves as well-rounded individuals.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's guidance on careers and destinations for pupils when they finish school is very good.
- The school cares for all its pupils very well. There are strong support systems to provide additional help and guidance where needed.
- The governing body provides good leadership. Governors have a strong understanding of the quality of the school's work. They work well with school leaders to make the school better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is not fully closed.
- The school does not yet meet the needs of all the most-able pupils to excel in all subjects.
- Not all teaching promotes rapid and secure learning. Some teaching does not challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- In a few lessons, opportunities are limited for pupils to build up a deeper understanding of topics or to develop resilience and independence skills.
- The presentation of work in some pupils' exercise books is untidy and does not aid later reflection and revision of topics studied.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all pupils:
 - present their work well in exercise books
 - are given opportunities to acquire a deeper understanding of the key concepts in each topic
 - are assisted to develop resilience and independence skills in their learning.

- Further accelerate pupils' progress and attainment by ensuring that:
 - disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally
 - the most-able pupils achieve consistently high standards and are challenged to make the best progress possible in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- There was a decline in the school's performance in GCSE examinations in 2013. Since his appointment two years ago, the headteacher has driven an improvement agenda which has established a strong focus on the progress of pupils and on better teaching and learning. Leadership has faced many challenges. At first, measures were slow to impact. They have now gathered momentum and current pupils' progress is improving rapidly. The headteacher and his senior leadership team have created a culture within the school where all pupils are valued, behave very well and are committed to learning.
- Senior leaders provide strong challenge and support for both staff and pupils. They know the school well. Middle leaders are now well-positioned to drive improvement in teaching and learning and pupils' performance within their areas of responsibility. A recent appointment has greatly strengthened leadership capacity in science.
- Systems to track pupils' progress have been strengthened and are robust. The school's information on pupils' performance is comprehensive and informs where and when additional help and support for pupils is needed.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. There are clear expectations for high-quality teaching set by the leadership team. The evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate. Good and well-planned training opportunities for staff help them to improve and share the best practice.
- Self-evaluation is comprehensive and accurate and contributes to good development and improvement planning. The school knows where it needs to improve. There are robust systems in place to enable improvement. Teacher appraisal and performance management systems are effective and are having a positive impact on improved teaching and learning.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It provides opportunities for all pupils at Key Stage 4 in a range of both academic and vocational courses. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is being further developed; it provides opportunities across a wide range of subjects. In Year 7 and 8 the school has established a strong reading recovery programme. A good range of extra-curricular activities help to broaden and enrich pupils' experiences.
- Careers education is very well developed. The school has achieved the Gold Standard award in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). A high percentage of pupils progress to good or outstanding local colleges.
- Pupil premium funding is effectively used and gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing. Funds are used to enable additional support for disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum and to provide additional learning support and more enrichment opportunities.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of citizenship in a democratic society and to explore British values. This was exemplified in an assembly which explored the nature of British values and tradition through the lens of the Armistice Day commemorations. Pupils play an increasing part in assemblies.
- Links with the local authority have been strengthened in recent years and are now productive and helpful for the school. The school shares its very good practice on attendance improvement and behaviour with schools both locally and nationally.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school. Attendance at parents' evenings is high. Parents are kept well-informed of their son's or daughter's progress and welfare in school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are well informed about the work of the school. They are frequent visitors to the school and have a good understanding of its performance. They have a good understanding of school targets set against local and national standards.
 - Governors monitor the school's performance management systems for consistency and fairness. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and where it needs to improve.
 - Governors are well informed about the achievement of specific groups of pupils. They are aware that gaps exist between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others and monitor carefully the narrowing of those gaps. They monitor the spending and impact of pupil premium funding.
 - Governors are well informed on safeguarding practice and receive regular reports. All have received the appropriate safeguarding training.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is very productive work with parents and external agencies to safeguard pupils especially those who are more vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is improving quickly because of the strong efforts of leaders to make sure that all teaching is at least good. Because of improved teaching and focused lesson planning, pupils are now making better progress.
- Teaching is effective because teachers plan work to build on what pupils know and understand. Pupils are becoming more confident and resilient in learning. Activities meet their needs and they enjoy and are motivated by opportunities to extend and develop their knowledge and skills. Teachers often use questioning well to develop pupils' ideas and thinking skills. Pupils develop as independent learners. This was seen in a science lesson where three pupils relished the challenge of extension work and were in healthy and enthused competition with each other to master the topics.
- Increasingly, teachers are promoting higher expectations for pupils. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects. Teachers are increasingly focused on securing pupils' progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and this adds further strength to a positive learning culture. Much teaching in mathematics is effective and promotes good progress. This was also reflected in lessons observed in history, geography, physical education, modern foreign languages and science.
- The best qualities of teaching were seen in a very lively drama lesson where pupils worked on modernising the witches' scene from *Macbeth*. Pupils worked very hard to make the scene relevant to their audience. Ideas were debated, challenged, rejected or adopted at pace in a highly supportive and challenging atmosphere. Text from *Macbeth* was integrated into the modern setting and this enabled the pupils to further explore Shakespeare's language. The teacher offered support where necessary. Pupils performed their scenes to their peers with enthusiasm, skill and confidence. There was a buzz about the lesson. All made at least good progress.
- In a few less well-planned lessons, teachers do not always challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers do not always provide the opportunities for pupils to build up a deeper understanding of topics. Here, the most-able pupils are not sufficiently stretched and challenged in their learning and assisted in developing resilience and independence.
- Assessment at Key Stage 3 is based around identified key skills and learning specific to each subject. The skills and knowledge, if achieved, will enable pupils to reach their aspirational targets by the conclusion of Year 11. This process is proving effective. Inspectors observed pupils working well and intelligently with this approach to assessment.
- Marking is regular. Pupils respond to their teachers' comments and take advice. Marking provides a good guide for pupils in reassessing where they are and the next stages in their learning. In a number of exercise books, some pupils' work presentation is poor and does not help them with later reflection and revision of the topics.
- Teachers use imaginative display in both classrooms and around the school to stimulate pupils' learning.
- A strong reading culture is emerging across the school. Many pupils spoken to had a current reading book. The reading recovery programme in Years 7 and 8 has had a positive impact in allowing pupils with a low reading age to catch-up and become more engaged in reading. The library is well used at lunchtime for reading and individual study.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a calm, safe and harmonious place to work in. Pupils spoken to said that they enjoyed coming to school. Teachers show respect to pupils and this is reflected in positive pupils' attitudes and mutually respectful relationships with adults.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities as prefects, and mentors to younger pupils. Pupil leadership is encouraged. Activities such as a 'Dragons' Den' competition and working with business leaders on presentational skills enhances pupils' confidence. The school is a partner of the Manchester United Foundation. This supports the school to develop transition with primary schools and the development of leadership skills among its own pupils. Pupils lead football coaching sessions with primary school pupils.

There is a strong emphasis on the development of well-rounded individuals.

- Attendance is high. The school places a strong emphasis on attendance with individual and tutor group rewards for the best attendance in a given week or month. Attendance is high for all groups of pupils. Exclusions are low.
- Pupils spoken to said they felt safe in school. Strong welfare systems and support ensure that vulnerable pupils are looked after very well. The behaviour and welfare of the few pupils in alternative provision is monitored. Pupils are reintegrated back into school when appropriate.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to be informed and discuss such subjects as safety, e-safety, radicalisation and sexual exploitation. There are also good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The uniform code is strictly adhered to. Pupils are very neat in their uniforms and wear them with pride. They demonstrate respect for the school environment – keeping it very tidy and in good order.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils spoken to said that the incidents of bullying were rare and when they occurred they were dealt with quickly. Pupils are well informed about different aspects of bullying including homophobic and cyber bullying.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Almost no low-level poor behaviour was observed during the inspection. School records reflect strong pupil adherence to the school's behaviour code. Pupils are quick to settle into work in lessons and seek to get the best out of the time spent in class.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is very good and they talk with each other in a calm manner. They enjoy each other's company during social times.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Current pupils are making good progress across a broad range of subjects including English and mathematics. Gaps in pupils' knowledge are quickly closing in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils across the school are now set to achieve well by the end of their time at the school. This is because teachers now have a strong focus on pupil progress and robust tracking and intervention systems to support improvement are now having an impact.
- Information provided by the school, lesson observations undertaken and the scrutiny of a wide range of work during the inspection shows that pupils currently in school are on track to make expected progress and reach the standards expected for their age, given their starting points.
- GCSE results for 2015 show improvement in attainment overall and across a broad range of subjects. The percentage of pupils gaining five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics increased. Many more pupils made better progress across their best eight subjects, including English and mathematics.
- There remain achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school; however, these are quickly narrowing. School information indicates that these gaps continue to reduce for current disadvantaged pupils when compared to their in-school peers and others nationally. Inspectors tracked a group of disadvantaged pupils across subjects and scrutinised an extensive range of their marked work. Evidence gathered indicated that a significant number are currently making good progress.
- Some of the most-able pupils are not making the high levels of progress that should be expected of them because of insufficient challenge and stretch in some lessons. The school's leaders and governors are aware of this and that there is more to be done to ensure that all are supported to achieve their very best.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making improved progress because of additional support and a greater understanding of their individual needs.
- The reading ages of pupils are well tracked in Years 7 and 8. Any gaps are quickly recognised and closed.
- The progress of the few pupils who have alternative provision is monitored carefully.
- Very good information, advice and guidance with a strong focus on aspirations ensures that a high proportion of pupils take up post-16 education.

School details

Unique reference number	136987
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10001433

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	632
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacky Davies
Headteacher	Mark Harrison
Telephone number	0161 794 6215
Website	www.theswintonhigh.co.uk
Email address	Swinton.highschool@salford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 March 2012

Information about this school

- Swinton High School is a below average-sized, mixed school that became a converter academy in August 2011.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. However, the percentage has increased over the last two years.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average, and increasing. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is slightly below the national average.
- The school receives support through the Salford Secondary Schools Partnership. The school supports schools locally and nationally on attendance and behaviour strategies.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school offers alternative provision in four separate locations for four pupils.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects across the school within different age groups. Two lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Four extensive learning walks were undertaken by inspectors accompanied by a senior leader. Selected individual pupils were tracked across lessons to observe their progress. Inspectors looked closely at samples of written work produced by disadvantaged and most able pupils in a range of subjects and year groups. They also watched pupils' behaviour around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and three groups of pupils. Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation and development plans, information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, information on attendance, documents and records about behaviour and safeguarding, records of checks on teaching and learning and of teachers' performance management, and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Thirty-four parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors considered their views. Inspectors also reviewed the school's own records of feedback from parents and pupils. They also took account of the responses to an online questionnaire from 50 staff.

Inspection team

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