

The Mosslands School

Mosslands Drive, Wallasey, Merseyside CH45 8PJ

Inspection dates	19–20 April 2016
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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is transforming the school. He is ably assisted by an effective senior leadership team.
- As a result of strong leadership and a determined drive to improve teaching, achievement is good. Pupils are making good progress from their starting points in Year 7.
- The performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly and the gap between their achievement and that of others is narrowing.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is good. Strong leadership and good support from additional staff have ensured that these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe and well supported. They generally behave well in lessons, enjoy class discussions and take pride in their work.
- Relationships are strong. Staff are ambitious for their pupils and determined in their aim to get the best from each one academically and personally.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are usually well planned and well delivered. The school's new approach to assessment and marking allows pupils to clearly understand what is expected of them and how to improve. Teachers generally capture pupils' interest well.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to develop. They provide strong support for school leaders and challenge them to improve the school further.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well taught, follow courses tailored to their abilities, and receive good advice about the next stages of their education and employment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, but especially the most able, is not always as high as it could be.
- Attendance rates are improving but a few pupils still miss too much time at school.
- Development planning in the sixth form is not yet sufficiently focused on improving outcomes for students.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that all teachers provide a consistently high level of challenge, particularly for the most able and from the start of Year 7
 - building on the successful measures that the school has taken to improve attendance and making sure that all groups of pupils attend school regularly and that persistent absence continues to fall
 - ensuring that development planning in the sixth form is focused more precisely on raising attainment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He is determined in demanding the best of both pupils and staff and this has led to rapid improvement since the previous inspection. He is ably supported by an effective senior leadership team who share his vision for improving The Mosslands School. Accurate self-evaluation leads to continuous improvement.
- Teaching is rapidly improving because of the focus on the outstanding learning programme and the commitment of teachers and leaders to raise standards. Leaders carry out rigorous checks on the quality of teaching, advice and mentoring are provided for those who need it, and good practice is shared across the school. The school is developing its own 'teacher champions' from the outstanding teacher programme. Salary increases are closely linked to the achievement of pupils.
- The middle leaders of the school are now a strength instead of a weakness as identified at the last inspection. Middle leaders track progress and the quality of teaching closely. They report to governors and rigorously evaluate what they do well and what can be improved. Attitudes to learning have improved greatly because pupils are stimulated by good teaching and because of the positive school ethos.
- Pastoral leadership is highly effective in maintaining improvements to behaviour in school and in ensuring that the school provides a safe environment where all pupils feel safe, respected and nurtured. Attendance is monitored closely, including that of the small number of pupils educated for part of the time at alternative providers. It is slowly improving, although attendance remains an area for improvement.
- The school's transition arrangements to help pupils settle quickly when they move from their primary schools are good, and especially for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. There are many opportunities to become used to their new school before they join at the start of Year 7.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to help disadvantaged pupils receive the academic and social support they need to help them make good progress in their learning and development. As a result, the gap between their achievement and that of others in the school is narrowing rapidly. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is even closer. The Year 7 catch-up funding is invested in an effective accelerated reader programme, which ensures that lower-ability pupils are able to learn more effectively at secondary school.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. It is broadly academic but also offers vocational subjects and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn new skills. The STEAM programme (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) is especially linked to developing employability skills. There is a very wide and well-chosen range of extra-curricular opportunities to enhance learning. These include chess, fencing, technology club, theatre visits and many sporting activities. The school has a nationally successful debating team and recently came first, second and third in the North West Formula 1 technology challenge. The school is very outward looking and has international links with schools in South Africa and China. There are Erasmus exchange visits to Sicily, Poland and France.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils are aware of the important work of Christian Aid and Islamic Relief, discuss moral issues in many subjects including science, and enthusiastically support many local and national charities. Their understanding and awareness of British values are seen in their charity work, sense of fair play and many experiences of democracy in action. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and leave school able to make a contribution to society.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity well. All groups of pupils are achieving better results than in the past but there is more to do to promote the achievement of high-ability pupils from the start of Year 7.
- The school has worked well with the local authority which has provided good advice and support. The school is developing a range of partnerships with other schools and so is contributing to school improvement across the local area.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have taken the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection seriously and, working with leaders, have helped to develop an action plan which is securing sustained improvements. They make a good contribution to the school's self-evaluation and development planning. Governors regularly visit the school and are well informed about strengths and areas which still need to improve. Governors have undertaken extensive training to enable them to hold the school to account fully. They are well informed about behaviour, attainment and progress, and make sure that the school gets full value from the additional funding it receives. They maintain an overview of the performance of staff, which is managed well by school leaders who ensure that salary increases are based on improved achievement of pupils. Governors ensure that health and safety regulations are fully met and that pupils are safe in school. The financial management of the school is strong. The budget deficit from three years ago has been eliminated. Overall, the governors bring a good range of skills and experience to support and challenge the leadership of the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The checks on adults working in the school are rigorous. Pupils feel safe and know whom to turn to if they have a problem. All staff have completed training on the dangers of extremism and are well trained to identify any safeguarding concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is typically good and is characterised by effective planning, skilful delivery and accurate assessment. Most teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' starting points and build successfully on their learning. Pupils make good progress across a range of subjects.
- In many lessons, teachers' expectations are high and pupils rise to the challenge. However, in a minority of lessons, challenge is less evident and especially for the most able. This is most evident in Year 7 where pupils are sometimes repeating work they have already mastered in primary schools.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge that sustains pupils' interest. They provide many opportunities to deepen knowledge, consolidate and build on understanding, and practise new skills. Teachers in science are particularly adept at providing concrete illustrations to explain abstract ideas.
- Teachers generally adhere to the school's marking policy and most pupils use feedback to improve their work. The school sets homework which increases in frequency as pupils move up the school. This consolidates learning and helps pupils to develop research skills. The school has successfully developed a new assessment policy which seeks to promote excellence in every year group.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work with positive attitudes so that they learn from their mistakes and are keen to improve. The presentation of work in pupils' books is variable but, by the time they reach key stage 4, most pupils are taking pride in their books.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively in lessons, and the special educational needs coordinator works well with teaching assistants to develop their work with individual pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The great majority of pupils are well motivated, respectful and appreciative of their teachers, and collaborate well when working in class. Most take a pride in the presentation of their work and are ambitious for their future lives. They become resilient and more confident as they move into key stage 4.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their work to support local and national charities through the house system. A favourite charity is the Guide Dogs for the Blind, and for the last few years a guide dog has been resident in school each day as part of its training.
- The Mosslands School provides a very safe and nurturing environment. The school works well with local schools and agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils so that they are able to go on to successful further education and worthwhile careers.

- Arrangements to welcome new pupils into Year 7 are good. Pupils have many opportunities to spend time in the school before they join so that they generally settle quickly, make friends and get on well with their teachers.
- Pupils in all year groups confirm that they feel safe in school, are free from bullying and know that any incidents would be dealt with quickly by adults. Homophobic and racist incidents are very rare. Pupils are well aware of risks, including the misuse of social media, drug abuse and the dangers of extremism.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has effective policies for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour and is now able to put the emphasis much more on rewards than sanctions.
- There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils are polite and friendly and willing to help each other. They look after the grounds and buildings well. There is little or no evidence of litter or graffiti.
- Attendance is slowly improving but remains just below average. Unauthorised and persistent absence have both reduced in this academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils in all year groups and across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, are good. Progress and attainment in English are particularly good and there is a strong improvement in mathematics and science outcomes. Pupils' progress in subjects which were previously identified as weaker, such as geography and history, is now much better and attainment is rising. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent and knows that progress can still be better in mathematics and science.
- Attainment of five passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been well below the national average in the recent past but is now in line with national averages. The school's tracking system is both rigorous and reliable and shows that most pupils are now making good progress. This is confirmed by scrutiny of the work in pupils' books.
- The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others, either in school or nationally, have narrowed rapidly and substantially over the last two years. Up-to-date information shows that this trend is set to continue in the current year. Disadvantaged pupils are now making faster progress than before. The gap between disadvantaged pupils in school and all pupils nationally is narrowing more quickly than the in-school gap because all pupils in school are making better progress as teaching has improved.
- The school is addressing the previous underperformance of the most-able pupils, with the result that in 2015 the most-able pupils matched the attainment of similar pupils nationally. Middle-ability pupils have fallen short in the past but, again, their progress is improving. Leaders are aware that setting higher expectations from the start of Year 7 will help to accelerate the progress of both high- and middle-ability pupils and lead to higher attainment. The new assessment system established in September is designed to analyse groups of pupils more rigorously, and should help to improve the progress of all pupils as it becomes embedded.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve well. Their progress exceeds national figures because they are very well supported in school, both academically and with sensitive pastoral care.
- The very small number of pupils who attend some alternative provision with other providers are carefully monitored for their attendance and progress. Attendance has risen for these pupils and they are working towards worthwhile qualifications.
- There is a good focus across the school on developing literacy. Pupils have numerous opportunities to enjoy reading for pleasure. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in lessons and become literacy leaders. More subjects are ensuring that there are greater opportunities for extended writing and pupils are encouraged to develop debating skills. The school is a STEAM centre, promoting science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, with the result that pupils' basic numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum.

- The outcomes achieved by pupils allow them to progress to the next stage of their lives successfully, whether that is in sustained education, employment or training. Evidence on pupils' destinations in 2015 after Year 11 shows that the proportion of pupils successfully progressing to courses or employment is above average and, in the case of disadvantaged pupils, well above average.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The sixth form, which is smaller than average, offers a safe and challenging community in which students are able to develop their interests in an ambitious, aspirational and happy environment.
- Nearly all students complete the course they start, so retention rates are high, reflecting the view of students that they feel secure and 'enjoy life in the sixth form'. Attendance is rising in both Year 12 and Year 13.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form is good, even though attainment is below average in some areas. This is because the school invests to ensure that its inclusive approach is reflected in a broad, balanced curriculum offering three pathways. Students may progress to higher education, apprenticeships or employment, complemented by relevant work experience. Many students are first-generation university applicants. Destinations in 2015 saw 57% going on to university, 22% on to apprenticeships or employment and 17% on to other further education. Outcomes in vocational subjects are particularly strong.
- Teaching is good across the range of subjects but particularly strong in mathematics and psychology. In mathematics, students explore the reasons behind theoretical concepts rather than simply apply abstract formulae. This strong teaching is leading to improving outcomes anticipated in 2016 and 2017.
- The curriculum is broadened through a partnership with a local college. Access is available to all students who have yet to achieve a resit grade C or above in either GCSE English or mathematics. Success rates are in line with national averages. Students have ample opportunities to develop employability skills.
- Students speak highly of the pastoral support they enjoy. They know there is always useful guidance on any personal issues they may have, and they feel very confident to talk to teachers about any problems. Students confirm that poor behaviour is never an issue. They know that punctuality and attendance are important.
- There are numerous opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership through the sixth-form council, as prefects, volunteering in the local community and as peer mentors for younger pupils. The sixth form is fully focused on enabling students to develop as responsible and accountable young people, with a clear understanding of moral and social issues and the part they, as individuals and collectively, have to play in their community and beyond.
- New leaders in the sixth form recognise that self-evaluation and development planning have previously lacked a sharp focus on improving attainment and achievement. Development planning is being reviewed, and improved teaching is accelerating progress in all subjects. Leaders are committed to achieving the best educational outcomes for their students.

School details

Unique reference number	105103
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10002184

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	863
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tara Hewitt
Headteacher	Adrian Whiteley
Telephone number	0151 638 8131
Website	www.mosslands.co.uk
Email address	admin@mosslands.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 November 2013

Information about this school

- The Mosslands School is a smaller than average secondary school for boys.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding is higher than average and includes nearly half the school. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils who are entitled to free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above average. The proportion of pupils with either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school occasionally uses three alternative providers: the Utopia Project, LearnfitEduc8Liverpool and Wirral Respite Alternative Provision (WRAP).
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership term has changed, most recently following the death of the deputy headteacher in February this year. An acting deputy headteacher is currently in post.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across all year groups and in a wide range of subjects. Several of these were joint observations with senior school leaders. They visited a registration group and an assembly. During lessons they took the opportunity to scrutinise the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. They met pupils from all year groups.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. These included information relating to safeguarding and child protection, attendance and behaviour, development planning, subject planning, tracking information on pupils' progress, performance management systems, and procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The views of staff were gained from 52 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and from talking to members of staff.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, from parents' comments on the Ofsted interactive website and from telephone conversations with parents who contacted the inspection team.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Leigh	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Wareing	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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