

The Mosslands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105103
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	324160
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Tetik HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	1303
Sixth form	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Henry Gun-Why
Headteacher	Mr Mark Rodaway
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2006
School address	Mosslands Drive Wallasey Merseyside CH45 8PJ
Telephone number	0151 6388131
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Mosslands School is a larger-than-average boys' comprehensive school, which accepts girls in the sixth form. It has specialist status as a technology college. The school is located in an area that is socially and economically disadvantaged. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs are above the national average and increasing. Most students are of White British heritage. The percentage of students entitled to receive free school meals is above average. The school is celebrating its centenary this year. It has achieved Healthy School status and the Artsmark Silver award. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Mosslands School is a rapidly improving school providing a good quality of education. This is due to the combined determination and hard work of the governors, headteacher, staff and students to raise standards. The school is living up to its mission statement of providing 'care, commitment and challenge'. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher and the effective senior leadership team, GCSE results rose significantly in 2008, reversing a downward trend. Standards at both key stages are broadly in line with the national average for boys and are continuing to rise. Inspection evidence and sound school tracking data indicate that pupils are making good progress overall across both key stages. Progress in English is slower but improving. The school has implemented improved arrangements for target setting and tracking of the progress of pupils, which are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Outstanding care, guidance and support enable most students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress and some to make very good progress.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They say they feel safe and behaviour around the school is generally orderly. However, behaviour is satisfactory overall because of the low-level, disruptive behaviour of a small minority of students in some lessons. Students say they enjoy coming to school and attendance is in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice and, as a result, most students make good progress. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching by providing effective professional development opportunities for staff and promoting students' good behaviour in lessons. However, in a small number of lessons, the progress of a few students is sometimes slower. This is because work is not well-matched to students' needs or because of the low-level, disruptive behaviour of a small minority that is not always dealt with effectively.

The quality of the curriculum is good and is well-matched to students' needs and interests, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students say they like the choice of courses they have and speak positively about the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. New 'pathways' and a wide range of vocational courses are beginning to capture students' interest and have a positive effect on standards.

Leadership and management are good. The school has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement at the last inspection. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school provides good value for money, targeting resources well to meet the diverse needs of students. As a technology college, the school has improved resources to support subjects within its specialism and this is contributing to raising standards.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. The school is part of the Wallasey Schools' Consortium and provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses, which meet the needs of students. The standards reached by students in the sixth form are in line with national averages. In 2008, students made particularly good progress on GCE AS courses, with the best achievement being in business studies, information and communication technology (ICT) and psychology. A number of initiatives have recently been introduced and the school's improved tracking indicates that these are having a positive effect on students' achievement. Sixth form students report that, in Year 11, they received good advice and guidance about sixth form

courses available at The Mosslands and in the other consortia schools. Many students, including the very small number of girls, reported that they chose The Mosslands sixth form because of its results. The vast majority of students are able to study the subjects of their choice. Attendance in the sixth form is in line with the national average. Over half of Year 11 students continued their education in the sixth form in 2008. The percentage of students progressing to higher education has increased over the last four years and 74% progressed to higher education in 2008. Students report that they receive good support and advice about their university applications. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons, students are effectively challenged, pace is good and there is a good variety of activities including, where appropriate, independent learning, paired and group work. Students are clear about their target grades and they feel well-supported and value the good relationships that they have with staff. The overall quality of students' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Sixth form students set a very good example to the main school students. They are a positive influence and contribute well to the life of the school and the local community. For instance, they serve as prefects, coach lower school sports teams, support local primary schools and organise an annual function for senior citizens. Students enjoy being part of the sixth form at The Mosslands and commented that the sixth form is a good stepping stone to university.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards at Key Stage 4, particularly in English.
- Ensure students experience high-quality teaching consistently.
- Ensure that behaviour is good in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the school with standards of attainment that are below average overall. They make good progress in Key Stage 3 and achieve standards that are broadly average in mathematics and science. They continue to make good progress in Key Stage 4 and achieve standards that are broadly in line with the national average for the percentage of boys achieving 5 or more GCSEs grade A* to C including English and mathematics. Standards at Key Stage 4 rose in 2008. Effective tracking systems have enabled the identification of underachievement and the targeting of interventions successfully to raise standards. Progress in mathematics has been consistently good for four years. Most students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and some make very good progress. This is due to the curriculum being matched well to their needs and interests, as well as outstanding care, guidance and support. In 2008, students at GCSE attained best in mathematics, music, science, and physical education. The variations in attainment between some subjects have been reduced and the school's recently implemented strategies are having a continued impact. However, the school recognises that there is more to achieve and raising standards at Key Stage 4, particularly in English, is a priority.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with students being encouraged to think of others and show respect for all. Most students behave well but a small minority are a disruptive influence. The school has identified this as a concern and staff work together to tackle negative behaviour.

Most students' conduct in all areas of the school site is sensible. Attendance is satisfactory and is very close to the national average. The persistent absences of a small minority are being reduced through robust measures, which include prompt contact with families. Students respond well to the school's healthy eating initiatives and many attend the breakfast club. Many students remain on the school site throughout lunchtime and are beginning to make more healthy choices in the school canteen, with some being involved in planning menus. Students use water fountains and they know why drinking sufficient water is important to their health and well-being. The promotion of citizenship and self-respect through the comprehensive personal, health and social education programme gives students the confidence to live together in a harmonious community. Students are prepared well for the world of work as they develop good numeracy and ICT skills as well as a good understanding of financial awareness. When asked about the best things about their school, students spoke about their friendly and helpful teachers and other adults who support them throughout their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice. It has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan work that meets the diverse needs of students and builds on prior learning. Their good use of ICT helps engage students and expert demonstrations make it clear what students are expected to do. In the best lessons, students are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of their peers against clear success criteria. This enables them to assess their own progress and identifies the next steps they need to take to improve. Successful lessons are characterised by students' clear engagement in interesting activities. Practical activities, particularly, reinforce learning and challenge students to demonstrate what they have learnt. Learning is good when teachers ask questions that check students' understanding and stretch their thinking. Good relationships underpin secure classroom management and help create a good working atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants provide active and effective support to build confidence and to enable students of all levels of ability to participate fully in lessons and make good progress. Marking is generally of good quality providing clear guidance to students on the next steps to take to improve their work. However, there is some variation in the quality of marking between subjects. In a small minority of lessons, planning for the diverse needs of learners is less effective or low-level disruption slows the pace of learning because some students are not fully engaged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is flexible and developed to meet the students' interests and capabilities and is responsive to local needs. There is a wide range of courses available and an increasing range of vocational courses at Key Stage 4. New 'pathways' and courses are supporting learners' needs. Students enjoy the range of subjects that are on offer, particularly the practical subjects. Many changes are very new and are just beginning to have a positive impact on students' achievement and their personal development. The curriculum caters well for students with additional needs and this helps some to make very good progress. Students are prepared well for their future economic well-being through enterprise education. There is also good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. The 'growing your own workforce' programme supports

future economic well-being effectively by developing good links with companies to enhance opportunities and experience in engineering. This is evident in the fact that the large majority of students go on to further education, employment or training. A wide range of enrichment activities links well to subjects to enhance learning further. Cultural awareness is promoted through international trips and the curriculum, but there are fewer opportunities for students to develop an awareness of cultural diversity within Britain. Specialist subjects are having a positive impact on students' achievement and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. All statutory procedures are in place. Good links with primary schools and a carefully prepared induction programme ensure that students feel valued and cared for. They say they feel safe and secure, always knowing that they have someone to help them when they need it. Students with additional needs and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are cared for exceptionally well and most of them achieve well because of the outstanding support they receive. Students who use wheelchairs are integrated fully within the life of the school and an outstanding feature is the way that all work together within a caring community. Students are generally aware of their targets and the tracking system ensures that those who are underachieving are identified early and suitable support is provided for them that enables them to catch up. In terms of improved academic results, the full benefits of new initiatives are still to be fully realised. The school is working hard to improve the quality of information provided to parents about students' progress through review meetings and written reports. The reports include end-of-key-stage targets but do not provide clear information about end-of-year targets for students.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and the senior leadership team provide a clear strategic vision that is focused wholly on improving performance in all aspects of the school's work, with raising standards at the centre. This vision is communicated well to all staff because they are involved in the improvement process by the system of target setting, linked through performance management to professional development. A management structure of devolved responsibilities has been developed, in which the roles of all managers are well-defined, so that accountability for performance is clear. They make effective use of challenging targets to raise and measure performance. The school knows its strengths well and is aware of areas for improvement because there is a system for monitoring performance closely, using a variety of methods, for example, statistical analysis, target reviews and direct observation. A strong feature of the system is the rigorous review of the effectiveness of initiatives. The school makes very good use of partnerships and links with other agencies to extend its provision and to enhance learning. Community cohesion is promoted well both within the school and local community. Awareness of cultural diversity is developed through the curriculum and growing international links. There are fewer opportunities to develop students' awareness further by engaging with other students from a wide range of backgrounds within Britain. Governors bring professional expertise to their work and hold the school to account rigorously. The school's leadership and management provide it with a good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team so warmly to your school recently. We would particularly like to thank those of you who gave up your lunch break to talk to us. We enjoyed meeting you and getting to know your school. We also appreciated the questionnaires returned by your parents and carers.

Some of you told us that the best thing about the school was the staff. You said you appreciate the way they try to make learning fun and that they give up their time to help you. The inspection team judged your school to be good. Here are a few examples of some of the good things we found during our visit.

n Your school is led and managed well.

n Standards are rising and you make good progress.

n You feel safe. You say if bullying occurs you are confident that it will be dealt with swiftly and that there isn't as much bullying as there used to be.

n You enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school provides.

n You enjoy the range of subjects on offer and most of you can study the subjects you choose at GCSE and in the sixth form.

We have asked the school to:

- improve standards at Key Stage 4, particularly in English
- ensure you experience high quality teaching consistently
- ensure that behaviour is good in all lessons.

It is important that you all help your school do even better by continuing to work hard and attending regularly. A small minority of students disrupt some lessons by misbehaving. They should improve their behaviour.

We wish you all the very best in the future and good luck with your examinations.