

# Standish Community High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106531
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	336689
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael McLachlan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1261
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Adrian Hardy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Hugh Crossan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Kenyon Road Standish Wigan WN6 0NX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Forty one lessons were observed and 41 teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of students from each year group, the headteacher, senior staff, middle leaders, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's website and a range of documents including the school prospectus, safeguarding and other policy documents, students' targets and tracking data, curriculum documents, guidance for students and parents, the minutes of recent governing body meetings, and the outcomes of student and staff questionnaires. There were 236 parental questionnaires which were received and examined.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment, learning and progress of students, particularly in GCSE mathematics and for those with average attainment on entry to the school
- the improvement in students' personal development and their engagement with and contribution to the school since the last inspection
- the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, and the accuracy of the school's evaluation of these aspects
- the impact of changes made to the curriculum and the care and guidance systems since the last inspection, particularly in providing vocational opportunities and supporting vulnerable groups
- the recent changes to the school's leadership, its implementation of the raising attainment plan in mathematics and its capacity to further improve the school.

## Information about the school

The school has above-average numbers of students on roll. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is low as is the number of students who speak English as an additional language. The school is designated as a specialist language college and has gained a second specialism in mathematics and computing. The school has achieved many external awards including the International Schools Award, the information and communication technology mark, the Charter Mark, Investors in People, and the Healthy Schools award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Standish Community High school is a good and improving school which very effectively meets the needs of all its students. It has a number of outstanding features. Provision for care, guidance and support for all students and particularly its most vulnerable, through the school's excellent student support service, is exceptional. The school has established excellent partnerships with other providers to improve the well-being of students and the breadth of curriculum on offer. This has resulted in improved outcomes, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those previously less motivated to come to school. Consequently, attendance at school is now high and all students who left last year moved on to further education, work or training.

Achievement is good. Students are actively involved in learning and keen to do well in their lessons and other activities. Learning and progress are also now good – a substantial improvement since the last inspection. Data for last year indicated above-average attainment and good progress overall and that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities made outstanding progress. However, the progress made by students with broadly average attainment on entry to the school was only satisfactory. Too little action has been taken specifically to assess if this group's progress matches the good progress made by most others in the school and to provide specific support to improve this group's attainment across all subjects.

Attainment in many subjects, such as English, is high. However, attainment in mathematics fell to below average last year and students' progress in this subject has been too slow for some time. The governing body, senior staff and the mathematics department have rigorously implemented a raising-attainment plan which has resulted in higher attainment in the GCSE mathematics modules taken so far. However, progress in this subject, while improving, is satisfactory rather than good. Too little action has been taken to ensure that all students make good progress given their starting points. Other outcomes for students are good with particular strengths in students' moral and spiritual development and their contribution to school life and that of the local and international community. Students and their parents and carers express very high levels of satisfaction with the school and in particular the way it keeps students safe.

The headteacher, who retires this year, can be justifiably proud of the improvements he, with the full support of the governing body, senior team and staff, has made since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to robust and incisive actions when weaknesses are identified. The headteacher has successfully introduced a culture of setting ambitious targets and a focus on improving teaching and learning. Similarly, there has been a strong focus on developing staff and leadership at middle and senior

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levels. This successful drive for improvement combined with rising attainment and improving progress, particularly in mathematics, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve GCSE results and the students' rates of progress in mathematics for all students for this and subsequent years by:
  - regularly monitoring students' progress towards the targets they have been set
  - using the strategies that have improved the number of GCSE grade C to cover all grades.
- Improve the achievement of those students who enter the school with average attainment by monitoring their progress more rigorously and providing extra support where it is needed.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Learning and progress seen in lessons were good. Students show enthusiasm for their work and respond well to challenging, thought-provoking tasks, particularly where this involves them as active learners. Good examples of this were seen in mathematics, where teamwork and problem solving are now common practice. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress when compared to similar students in other schools. However, the progress made by the middle-ability groups is only satisfactory, and in mathematics it has been persistently below average.

Attainment is judged to be above average rather than high because of the declining mathematics results over the last two years. This decline was in part due to the introduction of a new GCSE modular course, the demands of which, particularly with regard to the final module, were not fully recognised by the mathematics department. The challenging, raising-attainment plan for the subject has been effectively implemented and rigorously monitored by governors and the senior team, resulting in significant improvements in learning seen in lessons and improved modular examination outcomes. There has been a concerted focus on raising attainment at Grade C or better in mathematics and across the school and in supporting students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Insufficient thought has been given to tracking and supporting students with average attainment on entry to the school to ensure they also make good progress.

Students enjoy school and now achieve well. Their participation in the excellent range of health-related and other extra-curricular activities is good. This enjoyment is reflected in their good behaviour and high rates of attendance. Students overwhelmingly say they feel very safe in the school. They respond well to all it offers and show a growing maturity and concern for others locally and internationally. Contribution to the community is strong through the excellent work done by peer mentors in school and the substantial sums collected for charities and in support of the school at Ruiru.

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Consequently, students' moral and spiritual development is very strong.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and the use of assessment information to support learning have improved considerably since the last inspection. Around four fifths of teaching seen by inspectors was good and none was inadequate. Teachers show good strengths in planning and in their subject knowledge. There is a widespread emphasis on students' learning actively through practical tasks, group and paired work and the use of information and communication technology. For example, students were seen enthusiastically using a interactive voting device to answer questions based on their lesson, which were then collated by employing the computer to identify who was correct and who was the fastest. Students know their targets well and what they need to do to improve, and marking is good and informative.

The curriculum has been extended well, through outstanding partnership work with various providers, to ensure that there is a sufficiently broad vocational pathway, accessible to all students, which complements the largely traditional curriculum favoured

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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by many parents and carers. This has been particularly successful with students who in the past showed signs of disaffection. Motivation for these students is now high and their attendance has improved significantly. The range and take-up of extra-curricular provision are outstanding.

The language specialism has had an outstanding effect on students' preparation for life in a global market. The excellent Langtech Curriculum Street,' fully equipped with very realistic passport control, bank and shops has enabled students in the school and many thousands of visitors to experience what life is like in a foreign country in a very authentic way.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The work of the student services team, housed in their own centre at the heart of the school, is exceptional. Students and their parents and carers frequently commented on how outstandingly well they felt supported by the school and also by each other through the peer-mentoring scheme. Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is of very high quality and this is reflected in the excellent progress made compared to those of similar students nationally.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Strong teamwork characterises all that the school does. This has been established through effective leadership by the headteacher, with the overwhelming support of his staff, a good governing body, senior management team and subject and pastoral team leaders. While this has taken time to establish fully, the school has now secured raised expectations across all staff through the setting of challenging targets and the focus on improving teaching and learning through good staff development. The school is now reaping the gains through improvements in attainment and in faster rates of progress for the majority of students and subjects. The weakness in mathematics has been robustly challenged and the subject team is responding well to the intense scrutiny and significantly raised expectations in teaching and learning and in leadership of the subject.

The school effectively engages with parents and carers through regular progress reports and through the excellent school website which provides access to school policies, support for subjects and a wealth of information about the school's opportunities and successes. The links with partners to support curriculum improvements and particularly

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to support the well-being of students are outstanding. The impact is evident in high attendance and very high levels of satisfaction with all that the school offers from parents and carers and students. Students speak very highly of the school's additions to the vocational curriculum and its outstanding care, guidance and support system that ensure that equality of opportunity is supported and discrimination is tackled well. Safeguarding procedures and practice are robust and follow the required guidance in relation to safer recruitment and health and safety.

The school effectively promotes community cohesion and students benefit from good in-school and international activities that promote the sense of belonging. It has recognised the need to improve students' direct contact with different cultures in the locality. It has introduced a number of regular visitors from a range of cultures to improve students' experiences but knows there is still more to do to become outstanding in this aspect. Resources, particularly new technology equipment, are used well; consequently, the school provides good value for money. The use of funds derived from the specialist college provision in languages and in computing is particularly impressive in supporting the school and its many partners and in enabling the vast majority of specialist targets to be met.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

The very large majority of parents and carers expressed high levels of support for the school and what it provides for their children with regard to almost all aspects of school life. Support for the way students are kept safe, and the information provided regarding



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students' progress, were particularly strong, as were the views that their children enjoyed school and were happy in school. The school was thought to be well led and teaching was good. The least well-supported aspects, from a very small minority of parents, related to: the school's support for healthy lifestyles; how the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour; and the way the school took account of parents' suggestions. Inspectors agree with the views expressed by the very large majority of parents. They noted that, in the main, the school did respond well to parents' requests and provided good information through its excellent website. Overall behaviour seen in lessons and in the school was good. However, inspectors also noted that the school has highlighted the need to focus more on promoting healthy lifestyles and it is featuring this prominently in school and on the website.

Some parents were concerned about aspects of the provision for mathematics and inspectors agree with this concern. The school is implementing a robust action plan to bring about improvements and results in recent modular examinations are showing good signs of improvement.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Standish Community High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 236 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1261 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	103	44	119	50	12	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	104	44	124	53	3	1	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	105	44	121	51	6	3	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	40	127	54	11	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	78	33	145	61	6	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	31	140	59	18	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	24	146	62	29	12	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	82	35	133	56	8	3	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	30	150	64	9	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	36	118	50	19	8	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	26	141	60	15	6	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	95	40	129	55	9	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	115	49	110	47	6	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



20 April 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Standish Community High School, Wigan, WN6 0NX

I would like to thank you all for the way in which you greeted us and talked with the inspection team during our recent visit to your school. We found you courteous and friendly and were impressed by the way you represented yourselves and your school.

We think you go to a good school; as one of you succinctly said, 'Our school rocks!' Your response to our questionnaire showed overwhelmingly support for all aspects. You achieve well and make good progress because of your good behaviour, positive attitudes to school life and because you are taught and supported well. You told us you feel very safe in school. You showed us that you were good learners and were keen to take part in and outside lessons. We thought the care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding as are the student services centre, your excellent 'Languages Street' and the many partnerships your school has made to support you. All of this enables you to enjoy school as shown by your high attendance.

We noted that your headteacher is leaving. We think he can feel proud of the work he and his staff have done to bring about so many improvements to your school. In order to become even better we have made some suggestions. Results and progress in mathematics have not been as high as they should be. The school has started to improve teaching, has set you more ambitious targets and prepared you more carefully for the modular examinations. You have played your part by working hard and this is paying off. We were pleased with the numbers who passed and gained the highest grades in the Year 10's first module and the excitement you showed while waiting for your results. We think this good work needs to be extended to ensure you can all get higher grades, make good progress and achieve well.

We also noticed that, while many of you make good progress across all your subjects, some who start in Year 7 with an average level of ability only make satisfactory progress. We think the school and you should work hard together so that all of you can make good progress. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Michael McLachlan

Lead inspector

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