

Manningtree High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115206
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338536
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Roger Whittaker

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	833
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Pereira
Headteacher	Deborah Hollister
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2007
School address	Colchester Road Lawford Manningtree
Telephone number	01206 392852
Fax number	01206 391512
Email address	school@manningtree.essex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by 5 additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 37 lessons and held meetings with 16 members of staff, governors and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, departmental reviews, minutes of governors meetings, monitoring data in relation to students' progress and the quality of teaching. The majority of time was spent on learning. Inspectors received and analysed 347 parent questionnaires, 166 student questionnaires and 58 staff questionnaires.

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

- how well students were progressing in lessons and what evidence the school had to support their evaluation that students are making good progress
- what the school had been doing since the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that students are clear about the levels they are working at and how to improve
- the effectiveness of the school in ensuring consistency of practice across departments.

Information about the school

Manningtree High School is a smaller than average school. The number of girls attending the school is below average. A below average proportion of students are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language is well below average. The largest minority ethnic group is mixed White and Black Caribbean but the percentage is well below national average for this group of students. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but the proportion of those with statements of special educational needs is average. The school gained specialist science college status in 2006 and has achieved several awards including National Healthy Schools advanced level status, Sportsmark and the International School 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

Manningtree High is a good school that has improved in several key areas since its last inspection. Improvements in the quality of teaching and monitoring of students' progress have led to improved achievement. Students are particularly successful at GCSE, including in English and mathematics, attaining results that are above average. They leave school well prepared for the transition to college or other training. The performance in mathematics went down in 2008, but swift action taken by senior leaders to rectify weaknesses has put the school back on a firm footing.

Students are exceptionally well cared for as a result of the outstanding level of care, guidance and support they receive. Arrangements for safeguarding students are exemplary. The school treats each student as an individual and makes sure that they are able to make the best of the opportunities offered. These improvements since the last inspection demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Despite the significant improvements that have been made, some areas of inconsistency remain. The school has accurately identified these in its self-evaluation and set them as priorities in its improvement plans. There are still some variations in attainment and progress across subjects. This is because, although teaching is good overall, there remain some inconsistencies in the effectiveness of challenge for higher attaining students. In addition there is a general lack of opportunity for independent learning across the school. Monitoring and tracking of students' performance is rigorous and involves staff at all levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by:
 - increasing opportunities for students to work independently, extend their thinking and take responsibility for their learning
 - - ensuring that work is better matched to students abilities so that the most able are set more challenging work.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle management in those subject areas where students are not achieving as well as they could in relation to their capabilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students join the school with broadly average attainment. By the time they leave, Students' attitudes to learning and their ability to apply themselves in lessons are good.

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This is reflected in the good progress they made in lessons observed during the inspection. The rate of progress students make over time has been improving and is now good. The significant improvement in attainment in 2009 and the projections for 2010, based on interim module and test results, support this. The progress of individual groups of students, including boys, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and students from minority ethnic groups is in line with the overall rates of progress. Students' successful adoption of healthy lifestyles is reflected in the school's achievement of the Healthy Schools award advanced level status and the Sportsmark award.

Students demonstrate many positive attributes in their personal development. They show an excellent understanding of how to be safe, a view which was supported by parents. Bullying incidents are rare and students are confident that there is always a member of staff to talk to should the need arise. Behaviour is good and the number of exclusions has been reduced. Students are extremely effective members of their school community and are involved in the wider community, for example, local and national charity work and working with local development groups in planning facilities for the community. The specialist science college status has contributed well to links with feeder primary schools

The number of students who progress to employment, further education or training on leaving school at 16 is above the local authority average and has been increasing steadily, reaching 98% in 2009.

Attendance has improved year by year and is now outstanding. Students have good awareness of the value of diverse cultures and of moral, spiritual and social issues as a result of their involvement in a range of activities, including international links with China, Namibia and India as well links with schools that have different socio-economic and ethnic communities. These links are supported by regular assemblies and in subjects across the curriculum.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

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

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	
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching was good in the majority of lessons observed, enabling students to make good progress. Very good relationships between students and teachers were evident, creating a very positive environment for learning. Teachers are knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects and transmit their enthusiasm to the students. In the best lessons teachers use a wide and interesting range of activities, which engage students in their learning. For example students were highly motivated by a practical activity examining the effect of the 2012 Olympics on the local and wider community. They were excited at the prospect of doing further research on this topic. Students have a good understanding of their targets and most teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons and to monitor students' progress closely. Despite the many strengths in teaching observed during the inspection, there remain some inconsistencies. Even in good lessons, opportunities are sometimes missed to promote good independence. In satisfactory lessons the use of assessment information to plan activities that are well matched to the needs of individuals is too variable. As a result students' learning and progress are slowed. This is especially the case where the needs of higher attaining students are not specifically catered for. In some lessons there is often too much talking by the teacher, which reduces the opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills.

Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop the curriculum to ensure it more effectively meets the differing needs and aspirations of all groups of students. Vocational choices at National Vocational Qualification levels 1 and 2 offer older students a range of courses to enable them to move on to appropriate pathways post-16. The school enhances its vocational options through close work with partners including a number of local colleges and employers. Specialist science status is used well to enhance the curriculum, and reinforces the school's focus on raising standards in English, mathematics and science.

Students and their parents and carers are full of praise for the care and support provided by the school, and they are confident that the school is preparing students well for their future. Students are known as individuals, and a strong pastoral structure supports intervention where necessary. For example, students have access to a number of important external support agencies in addition to the school's in-house expertise.

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Evidence was seen of the excellent provision made for students who have diverse and challenging needs. Very effective transition arrangements ensure that students who join Year 7 settle into their new school quickly and smoothly. A parent commented, 'Pastoral care at Manningtree is excellent and benefits my child'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and enthusiasm of the effective head teacher and senior leadership team have focused the school on raising standards through creating a culture of high expectations that both staff and students support. The success of this is reflected in the willingness of all staff to improve their practice. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities throughout the school and heads of department are held accountable for the performance of their subjects. However, there is still some variation in the performance of departments, and the understanding of effective teaching and learning is not yet entirely consistent across the school. Self-evaluation has identified appropriate areas for improvement and suitable plans put in place to tackle these inconsistencies. The school science specialism is well managed and used to enhance partnerships with local schools and the wider community.

The views of parents indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the school. Attendance at school functions, such as parents' evenings, is good. The school provides termly reports to parents about their children's progress and consults them on major issues regarding changes within the school. Extensive and highly effective partnerships enhance the school's provision to contribute to the achievement and well being of students.

The school's promotion of equal opportunity is good and, for example, no groups of students underperform to any significant extent. The school's approach to community cohesion is good because it recognises at an early stage the need to link with schools and communities across the United Kingdom and abroad. Such links have been well fostered and enabled students to develop a good understanding of our multicultural society. Governors know the school well and continue to provide support. They are increasingly challenging the school to explain outcomes and actions. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding and involve effective record keeping, which is constantly reviewed and closely monitored.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

A significant percentage of parents responded to the questionnaire, those that did were highly positive about the education their children received at Manningtree High School. However, a few said that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. Their views support the judgements made by inspectors, particularly in relation to how well the school keeps them safe and meets their children's particular needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Manningtree 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 347 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 833 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	112	33	271	63	10	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	34	213	64	5	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	95	28	216	64	19	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	28	209	62	26	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	89	27	221	66	15	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	18	224	67	32	10	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	15	243	73	31	9	2	1
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)	106	32	200	60	6	2	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	86	26	222	66	18	5	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	92	27	211	63	14	4	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	17	221	66	31	9	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	121	36	194	58	11	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	137	41	185	55	8	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



28 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Manningtree High School, Manningtree CO11 2BW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you, and were impressed with the maturity with which you answered our questions. Yours is a good and improving school and you are right to be proud of it.

These are the main findings of the inspection:

The standards you reach at the end of Year 11 are above average and prepare you well to move on to further education or training.

You contribute to the school and wider community exceptionally well.

Your attendance is excellent and the majority of you make good progress although there is some difference across a few subjects.

Most teaching is good and you are given opportunities to be involved in interesting activities.

Staff take extremely good care to ensure you are looked after well and supported through the school. As a result you are and feel exceptionally safe.

Your headteacher and senior staff are enthusiastic and committed to improving the work of the school so that most of you achieve as well as you can.

We have asked the school to make the following improvements:

Ensure that in all lessons you are given opportunities to work independently and to work on activities which will help you all to achieve as well as you can.

Support all subjects to perform as well as the best.

We wish you every success in the future and hope you fulfil your ambitions.

Yours sincerely

Roger Whittaker

Lead inspector

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