

School report



Parrs Wood High School

Wilmslow Road, East Didsbury, Manchester, M20 5PG

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. From their starting points in Year 7 they make good progress so that by the end of Year 11, they reach standards which are above average in English and in mathematics.
- Students' achievement in science is good.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the college is good. Attendance is above average because students enjoy coming to school. They say they feel safe and well-cared for by their teachers. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that behaviour is good.
- The school provides excellent support for students who need additional help, for whatever reason. This support is helping them catch up with the standards reached by other students.
- Teaching is good and there are many opportunities for teachers to share the best practice that is seen in outstanding and good lessons.
- The headteacher and leaders at all levels provide a consistently challenging but caring approach to school performance and the school is well placed to improve further.
- Improvement plans are well-focused as a result of accurate self-evaluation. Actions are raising the quality of teaching and increasing the rates of progress made by students.
- Governors are knowledgeable, skilled and committed to the provision of a high quality education for the students. They provide high levels of challenge and support for school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in the sixth form still requires improvement.
- The gaps in attainment between students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and others have not yet fully closed.
- Teachers do not always use assessment data to plan work that challenges all students.
- There is still a small proportion of teaching that requires improvement.
- The quality of marking and written feedback, and of teachers' questioning, is not yet consistently strong.
- Numeracy skills are not promoted effectively by all teachers.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 52 lessons, and parts of lessons, were observed by inspectors. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the director of sixth form.
- Meetings were held with groups of staff, students and three members of the governing body and a telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to 64 staff questionnaires. They considered information from previous school surveys carried out with parents and students, three emails and a letter received from parents during the inspection, the responses of 68 parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and a telephone conversation with a parent.
- The inspectors reviewed work in students' books and listened to students read. They observed students moving around inside and outside the school and at different times in the day.
- They observed the schools' work and considered a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school improvement plan, minutes from governors' meetings and records of behaviour.

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Parrs Wood High School is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of girls is lower than the national average.
- The school has a much higher proportion of students who are known to be eligible for funding from the pupil premium (which is provided to support the learning of students who are entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of forces families).
- There are much higher proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is average and there is a lower than average proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a specialist resourced provision for its own hearing impaired students. Over the past three years, up to six students have been supported by this on-site facility.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is consistently good and increase the proportion that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan work that challenges all students to make rapid progress in their learning
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is of consistently high quality, within and across subjects, that written comments provide advice to students on how to improve their work and that students are given time to act on such advice
 - sharing the good practice that exists in effective questioning techniques, so that all students are provided with opportunities to deepen their understanding and develop their thinking skills.
- Promoting the development of numeracy skills across all subjects of the curriculum by all teachers.
- Continuing to raise achievement in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that all students entering the sixth form embark on courses that are well matched to their personal aptitudes and interests
 - setting suitably challenging and aspirational targets for all students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students arrive in Year 7 with standards that are just above average. As a result of good teaching, students overall make good progress so that, by the end of Year 11 they have reached higher than average standards in many subjects, including English, science and mathematics.
- Data provided by the school indicate that the good rates of progress being made by students in all year groups are expected to continue to rise. Lesson observation and scrutiny of work confirmed that students are making increasingly strong gains in their learning.
- Students are articulate and the promotion of literacy is a strong focus across the school and in all lessons. From their entry into Year 7, teachers ensure students read in all subjects and there is a particular focus on key words and technical subject specific language. Catch-up funding provides additional literacy support for students who enter the school with low reading ages and this is having a very positive impact on increasing the reading ages of these students.
- The additional specialist support provided for some low-ability students in English and mathematics is helping them to become increasingly confident and more engaged in their learning when they return to their normal lessons. This helps them to make progress in line with others.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well provided for in lessons and in the Hearing Impairment unit. As a result of the specialist support they receive and good teaching, these students make equally good progress to other students.
- Students for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- Teachers provide increasingly challenging and interesting activities within lessons to extend the learning for more-able students. Almost one third of Year 11 students achieved the English Baccalaureate in 2013. This was almost triple the 2012 figure.
- At the end of Year 11, the gap between the attainment in English and in mathematics of students eligible for free school meals and others is less than one grade and is closing steadily over time. They make good progress due to the focused and intensive support they receive.
- Overall attainment at the end of the sixth form is average. Standards at the end of Year 13 had risen steadily from 2010 to 2012 but fell in 2013 because the school had broadened access to allow students with lower grades to access courses and because the progress made by students in Year 12 had been slow. Some students had been accepted onto courses that were not entirely suitable for them and some set targets that were insufficiently challenging.
- Inspection evidence indicates that a change in leadership capacity, along with more robust monitoring and tracking of student progress, better quality teaching and a review of course suitability, is leading to students making quicker progress in most subjects in Years 12 and 13.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good or outstanding as a result of the strong focus placed on improving the quality of teaching by leaders throughout the school. There is, however, still some that requires improvement.
- Over time, teaching in the sixth form has required improvement. Observations seen during the inspection show that a higher proportion is now good. As a result, students in the sixth form are beginning to make better progress.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm helps to create lessons which students enjoy. Their calm approach to behaviour management means that students remain on task.
- Teaching is typically characterised by excellent classroom relationships, the provision of a variety of well-constructed activities, a strong focus on the development of literacy skills, opportunities for students to work collaboratively and clarity in terms of learning outcomes.
- In the best lessons tasks are matched accurately to individual student needs and provide

opportunities for students to put their learning into context. This was exemplified in an outstanding science lesson on how and why the earth's atmosphere changes. Learning outcomes were clearly matched to GCSE grade criteria. The teacher had planned and arranged resources and activities which appealed to students' interests and which enabled them to reach the highest grades. They made rapid progress in their learning.

- In less-effective lessons teachers provide too many answers themselves and their questioning does not allow or encourage students to think for themselves or to deepen their understanding.
- There has been a strong focus on teachers developing their ability to accurately assess students' learning through marking of written work and ongoing assessment during lessons. Very good examples of this were seen during the inspection. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school. In some lessons, teachers do not fully engage some students in their learning because tasks are not set at the right level for them. In written feedback, not all teachers provide advice to students on how to improve their work or give them time to act on that advice in lessons.
- Homework is used to extend and consolidate students' learning and the new virtual learning environment means that students are able to access work remotely.
- Relationships are strong and based on respect. All staff model the school's values and expectations and set an excellent example to students.
- Teachers and teaching assistants carefully plan in-class support and catch-up sessions for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are very effective in providing in-class support, which enables these students to make progress in line with others.
- There is a strong focus on literacy development in all subjects and students are developing good written and aural communication skills as a result.
- The development of numeracy skills has recently been identified as a priority for the school. During the inspection good examples of students using and applying numeracy were seen in a food technology lesson and a science lesson. This was not a common feature in all lessons and inspectors noted an over-reliance on calculators on some occasions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, including at lunchtime and break. Students consistently show respect towards one another and to adults. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in lessons that require improvement some students lose concentration and interest in their learning.
- Attendance has risen consistently for the past three years, including in the sixth form, and is above average. Students enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They say that behaviour has also improved in the last three years, since the headteacher was appointed. Students told inspectors that poor behaviour is not tolerated and that behaviour is consistently well-managed by all staff.
- There are ample opportunities for students to assume leadership roles and to become fully involved in school life. For example, sixth form students support staff in running the Friday evening Youth Club, Key Stage 4 students help younger students by acting as mentors and, during this inspection, students of all ages were involved in a school production of which the first show was performed to several hundred local primary school children.
- Students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, disabled students and those who have special educational needs appreciate the extensive support they get from adults.
- Bullying is rare and the school deals with any incidences of bullying effectively. Students understand all of the different forms of bullying, know how to protect themselves (including when using the internet) and are able to access support from adults, face to face or confidentially via the school website, and from a sixth form support group.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely positive about the school; believe that behaviour is good and that their children are safe.
- The number of fixed term exclusions has been reducing over the last three years as a result of

improved behaviour management strategies and there have been no permanent exclusions.

- When students were asked by inspectors how they would improve the school, they said they could not think of anything they would change.
- Students appreciate the contact they have with the headteacher, who takes every opportunity to talk to them. They say that he always greets them with a smile, finds something positive to say and encourages them to do their best.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders' monitoring and evaluation of performance is accurate. They know how to improve teaching and learning and have comprehensive plans to raise the quality of teaching and achievement further. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding, because improvements in teaching have not yet led to all students achieving the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The headteacher is a visionary leader. He has created strong leadership throughout the school. Leaders at all levels, including senior and middle leaders, as well as governors, are highly ambitious for students and strive to ensure that the school is continuously improving. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made to standards of behaviour, the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Student progress is assessed half-termly and this, along with information on their individual behaviour and attendance, is collated by leaders and used to highlight areas of specific need. Leaders at all levels use this information to identify students who are in danger of underachieving, for whatever reason, and to put in place appropriate support. This support is helping to raise achievement in all subjects.
- Staff questionnaires returned during the inspection showed that morale is high and the way ahead is supported by all. During the inspection it was apparent that staff are highly committed to the school and to the vision that has been created by senior leaders and governors.
- The performance of teachers is linked to pay rises when these are justified. Teachers report that these systems contribute to improving their professional development by clearly linking targets to the national Teachers' Standards. Teachers told inspectors that they receive good support in helping them to improve their performance in the classroom and their leadership skills.
- The curriculum is constantly being evaluated and refined to ensure a suitable range of courses, meeting the needs of all students, so they make increasingly strong progress. Students have good opportunities to engage in a range of activities outside the normal school day and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted in all areas of the curriculum.
- The school has used the pupil premium to improve achievement in English and mathematics by providing small group and one-to-one sessions with specialist teachers and extra revision.
- Students are well supported at each stage of transition. The school is inclusive and leaders promote equal opportunities well.
- In the last three years, leaders have created a wide range of opportunities for parental engagement. These include more regular contact about individual student's progress and behaviour and parenting courses. Senior leaders demonstrate more personal approach by visiting families in their homes where they see a need to do so.
- The school works well with other schools to secure high-quality professional development opportunities for staff.
- Quality assurance visits are undertaken termly by the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body demonstrates excellent capacity to fulfil their duties and responsibilities. They provide high levels of support and challenge to senior leaders, keeping a close eye on the school's performance. In addition, link governors meet with faculty leaders, are provided with very detailed information about students' progress and have a clear understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses within each faculty. Governors undertake regular and appropriate training. They contribute significantly to the school's own evaluation of its

performance and the production of the school development plan. Governors use their knowledge to hold leaders to account for the performance of teachers and ensure that pay is linked to performance. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, including ensuring that safeguarding procedures comply with national requirements. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and have appropriate systems in place to check how spending impacts on raising the achievement of eligible pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105556
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	429490

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	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,860
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzannah Reeves
Headteacher	Andrew Shakos
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2012
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