

Broughton Hall High School, A Technology College

Yew Tree Lane, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 9HJ

Inspection dates 5–6 November 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.

- From broadly average starting points on entry to the school, students achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 11. Achievement in Spanish and Technology is outstanding.
- Students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium make the same good progress as that of their peers and the gaps between their performance and that of other students are closing.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good and, on occasions, outstanding. Teachers have warm relationships with their students and the impressive team of teaching assistants provides good support for students who sometimes find things difficult.
- Students behave well and sometimes outstandingly well. They feel safe and well supported by staff, who, they say, 'Have high expectations of what we can achieve both now and in the future.' Students enjoy learning.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted outstandingly well. Students support a wide range of charities and, through educational visits to countries as far away as China, have a good understanding of cultures different from their own.
- The committed and talented headteacher, fully supported by the proactive senior team, has established a range of well-founded strategies to ensure that teaching and achievement continue to improve. Governors, too, know the school well and hold the leadership to account with rigour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and insufficient numbers of students in Year 11 reach the highest GCSE grades.
- Although progress is good in Year 12 and in vocational subjects, the sixth form requires improvement overall because not enough students reach the highest grades at A-level.
- There are insufficient opportunities, in teachers' questioning for example, to stretch the most-able in particular.
- Students do not always respond well enough to comments on how to improve their work.
- The good work of subject leaders in monitoring the work of their areas is not yet fully embedded in all departments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 45 lessons, taught by 44 teachers. One lesson was observed jointly with a deputy headteacher. Inspectors also visited two assemblies, one for sixth-form students and one for students in Year 11.
- They met with four groups of students including sixth-formers, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. In addition, they held meetings with pastoral staff, heads of academic departments, the special educational needs co-ordinator and members of the senior leadership team. They also spoke to the member of staff with particular responsibility for developing the impact of specialist status.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 47 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at students' files and exercise books, internal and external student attainment and progress data, school development planning and the school's view of its performance. They also scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings, reports written on behalf of the local authority and a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance. In addition, they considered information on how the school supports those students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

Inspection team

Jim Kidd, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Mark Shenton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized secondary school, which has held specialist technology college status since 1998.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below that usually found.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support though the pupil premium (additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- Over 90% of students are White British. The proportions of students from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language are lower than typically found.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision at a local community centre and also a unit for the visually impaired.
- Broughton Hall is a nationally-recognised Healthy School, holds the Artsmark (Gold) award and is an authorised Arkwright School for Engineering and Technology. The school shares some of its sixth-form provision with the neighbouring boys' school.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, from good to outstanding in order that a greater percentage of students make more than expected progress by:
 - providing students with sufficient opportunities to become more independent in their learning through research and problem-solving activities, and increase the proportions of the most-able reaching the higher grades of A* and A at GCSE and A*, A and B at A-level
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning requires students to think more deeply about the subjects they are studying
 - encouraging students to respond consistently well to comments in marking, which provide them with advice on how they can improve their work
 - fully embedding the good practice of subject leaders, so that they can take even more responsibility for improving teaching and for sharing good and exemplary classroom practice within their departments and across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join Year 7 with broadly average levels of prior attainment. The standards reached by students on entry to the school are rising over time. Over a three-year period, the percentages of students leaving Year 11 with five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics has fallen slightly but has remained above average. This represents consistently good achievement from students' starting points in Year 7 and demonstrates that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire are entirely satisfied with the progress their children are making.
- Inspection evidence, including lesson observations and a close consideration of the 2013 GCSE results and of the performance of students currently in the school, shows that standards are rising again and that attainment in science and humanities is now much better than before. Without doubt, students' progress and attainment in Spanish and also in a range of technology subjects continues to be outstanding.
- However, the school recognises that, although improving, the percentages of students reaching the highest GCSE grades of A* and A are not as high as they could be. The most-able, therefore, could do better. Similarly, although students' progress in the sixth form is good in Year 12 and also in a range of BTEC courses, there are fewer students than expected reaching grades A*, A and B at the end of Year 13. Nonetheless, the percentage of students entering the more prestigious universities doubled in 2013.
- The school takes students' literacy development seriously and they have many opportunities to reinforce their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in subjects other than English. Reading is an important element of form period time and students are encouraged to understand and to use specific subject terminology in history, for example.
- The school uses pupil premium funding wisely, to promote the personal and academic achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals effectively. For example, two homework supervisors have been appointed who offer an increasing number of helpful one-to-one and small-group tuition sessions.
- As a result, the gaps between the performance of these students and others in the school are closing. In English, for example, in 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals reached higher levels of attainment than counterparts nationally in English and modern languages. In addition, the percentage of these students gaining five or more GCSE grades A or A* rose markedly, to within seven per cent of their peers in Broughton Hall.
- There is a similar picture for disabled students and those with special educational needs. As a result of more focused support for these students, the performance of those supported at school action plus is accelerating.
- The small number of students from minority ethnic heritages achieve very well indeed and often at higher levels than White British students. The school monitors closely the progress of those students who attend alternative provision. These students are safe and achieve as well as their peers in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. There are examples of outstanding practice and, during the inspection, no inadequate teaching was seen. Indeed, in nearly three quarters of lessons observed, teaching, learning and students' achievement were good or better.
- There are strong relationships between students and the adults who work with them and staff prepare their lessons in detail. They have secure subject knowledge and often use stimulating resources to teach difficult concepts. In most lessons, the pace of learning is rapid and students have opportunities during and at the end of lessons to reflect on the progress they have made.

- In the best lessons, a Year 9 food technology lesson for example, students are challenged realistically, are fully aware of what they need to do to make progress and they take increasing responsibility for their own learning. As a result, students are fully engaged in the activities and the pace of learning is rapid.
- Similarly, in a Year 12 history lesson, students were required to consider some quite complex views of historians on the reign of Alexander II. As a result of challenging questioning from the teacher and strong support from ex-students who are now history undergraduates, they made outstanding progress and used subject-specific terminology, 'political spectrum', 'intelligentsia' and 'autocracy' accurately and in context.
- Students respond well and sometimes outstandingly well to the challenge of their teachers. A middle Year 9 Spanish set, for example, surprised themselves at what they could understand, and later say, after they had listened and responded in Spanish throughout most of the lesson. They demonstrated attainment well in advance of their ability group and their years.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding overall because teachers' questioning does not always require students, particularly the most-able, to think more deeply about the subjects they are studying and, through problem-solving and independent research to take more responsibility for their own progress.
- Marking and feedback to students has improved since 2012 and is now generally good. Teachers give students accurate advice on how they can improve their work but, unfortunately, students do not always respond to this as well as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud of their school and of the many opportunities it provides for them to develop both personally and academically. They hold their teachers and teaching assistants in high esteem and say that they feel safe in school because of the support they receive from the adults who work with them. In their words, 'We are surrounded by supportive and approachable grown-ups.'
- Students are of the view that bullying, although it does exist, is not a problem and is handled swiftly and sensitively by staff when it does occur. They have a keen understanding of the nature of bullying in all its forms and believe that prejudice-based bullying, including homophobia, is very rare indeed. As they say, 'Our school teaches us that we are all equal.'
- Students behave well around school and conduct and engagement in learning are sometimes outstanding. Students feel both valued and valuable and are grateful for the emphasis teachers place on improving their self-esteem. In a Year 8 history lesson for example, students were encouraged to have greater confidence in what they could achieve. As a result they surprised themselves at what they could do by the end of the lesson.
- Similarly, the introduction of Mandarin Chinese as an extra-curricular activity fascinates students and provides those known to be eligible for free school meals with even more opportunities to improve their self-confidence.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. There is a wide range of extra-curricular visits, to China for example, and students have a good awareness of cultures and religions which are different from their own. Students readily accept a wide range of responsibilities, as members of the school council for example, and sixth-formers support younger students with their studies. Students display an enviable social conscience and their work for a variety of charities, a local children's hospice for example, is well known in the local community.
- The Spanish exchange is a highlight of school life and students are motivated to higher levels of achievement by visits to universities, including Liverpool John Moore's and Manchester.
- Attendance is broadly average and students are invariably punctual to school and to lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The talented headteacher and the similarly talented senior leadership team lead by example and are held in high regard by the rest of the staff. Middle leaders, for example, comment, 'Senior leaders invite our opinions and listen to us. There are now so many opportunities for us to become more actively involved in improving the school. Senior leaders trust us but also hold us to account.' These staff demonstrate their commitment to the school and to the students in their charge when they say, 'We must now make sure that four levels of progress is the norm, not just three!'
- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have placed considerable emphasis, through half-termly progress meetings for example, on ensuring that leaders at all levels have a more accurate view of how well the school is doing. As a result, the school now knows itself well and leaders are fully aware of what needs to be done to ensure on-going improvement in students' achievement.
- More focused monitoring of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress has led to an improvement in classroom practice across the school. Heads of department now take a more proactive role in leading developments in the subjects for which they are responsible and they analyse and evaluate achievement data with the utmost accuracy. The school recognises, however, that some subject leaders are relatively new in post and their work to improve teaching and to share good and exemplary classroom practice across the school is not yet fully embedded.
- Good leadership in the sixth form has ensured better attainment and progress in Year 12 and in the BTEC programme, but is also aware that the percentages of students reaching the highest A-level grades are not high enough.
- The leadership and management of the technology specialism are strong. Three members of the technology faculty are members of the Learning Development Team; they coach staff and also deliver in-service training on teaching techniques and improving assessment practice and feedback to students.
- Performance appraisal arrangements are secure, linked directly to student progress and lead to relevant in-service training both within the school and outside its walls.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and practice fully meet current requirements. In addition, the school rejects discrimination in all its forms.
- The local authority provides strong support to the school, particularly in relation to the development of middle leaders and also in relation to reviews to consider the performance of academic departments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are much better informed about school performance than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The establishment of the Governors' Challenge Board has enabled them to become more aware of school performance and they now ask searching questions of the leadership about how well the school is doing in all areas of its life. They have a keen understanding of both internal and external data on students' achievement and take part in 'learning walks' and lesson observations to gauge the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
 - Many members of the governing body have held and, in some cases, still hold senior positions in education and they use their profound educational experience to both support and challenge the leadership. They oversee performance management arrangements very well and continue to ensure that staff receive financial reward only if they meet their classroom targets in relation to student performance. In addition, they play an active part in deciding how pupil premium funding is spent and they monitor very closely the impact of this spending on the personal and academic achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals.

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	104713
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	426176

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1278
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Eves (acting Chair)
Headteacher	Mrs S Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2012
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