

Golborne High School

Lowton Road, Golborne, Warrington, Cheshire , WA3 3EL

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 and GCSE results are improving significantly year on year. Students make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Senior leaders observe lessons regularly and the school provides good training so that teachers can continue to improve their skills.
- Students behave well and feel very safe in school. They understand and respect the school's high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes to others.
- The governing body provides good governance of the school and, by carefully reviewing all the school's activities, ensures a good balance of challenge and support for senior leaders.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide very good leadership which has been the driving force behind the improvements brought about since the previous inspection.
- The good curriculum meets the different needs of students very well.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and helps students to develop into well informed and thoughtful young people.
- Support for students who find it difficult to learn or settle in school is a strength of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to raise students' achievement to the highest levels. Students do not have enough opportunities to think for themselves and some teachers do not always set work that is matched closely enough to each student's learning needs.
- Some of the improvements that senior leaders have made are not as well established in some subjects as in others, so that the pace of improvement is not as rapid as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, of which three were joint observations with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, representative members of the governing body as well as members of staff, including senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school's work. A telephone discussion was held with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of 79 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 50 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including information on students' current progress, records and policies relating to planning and self-evaluation, behaviour and attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work during lesson observations.

Inspection team

Susan Wareing, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Dunne	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
Catherine Laing	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Golborne High School is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of White British origin.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding allocated for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority, or members of service families, is below the national average.
- There are no disabled students in the school. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The needs of these students relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and moderate learning difficulty.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school specialises in the visual arts.
- The school arranges part-time placements away from school for a very small number of students in Years 10 and 11, for example at Wigan and Leigh College of Further Education or Venture Learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently plan work that is precisely matched to the learning needs of every student
 - provide all students with more opportunities to think for themselves, so that they are challenged to achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that the school's good new policies and procedures are fully established in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with standards that are broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE passes is above average and rising markedly and consistently. On almost all other measures, students' attainment compares favourably with national expectations and is improving, including at the higher GCSE grades.
- Students achieve well across an increasingly wide range of GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, because the school acts quickly to improve performance, for example, by introducing new, more appropriate courses in sciences. In lessons observed, most students achieved well and sometimes their progress was outstanding.
- The school has a clear policy for early entry in GCSE mathematics and English. This ensures that all students continue with these subjects until they meet or exceed the challenging progress targets set for them. More-able students are entered for an A level transition module and statistics. Students generally read well and there is very strong support, partly funded by the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, for any students who have weaker reading skills. These students make rapid gains, typically adding over a year to their reading age within eight months. By the end of Year 11, most students' progress in English and mathematics is at least in line with the national average and set to improve further, according to assessment information held by the school.
- Students have opportunities in most lessons and in tutorial time, to practise their reading, writing and communication skills, but there is some inconsistency across subjects. Similar opportunities in mathematics are at an early stage of development.
- The school does not tolerate barriers to learning or any kind of discrimination. This determination is reflected in the support provided, in partnership with a range of outside agencies, for students with special educational needs. It is a strength of the school, due at least in part to improved leadership and management in this aspect of the school's work. By the end of Year 11, the progress of this group of students is in line with that of their classmates.
- Judicious use is made of funding received through the pupil premium, to provide individual teaching support in English and mathematics. The difference in progress between those who receive this support and those who do not has narrowed by 30% in the current year, almost closing the gap entirely.
- The very small number of students from minority ethnic groups make progress that is at least as good as that of other students in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, and in some lessons outstanding, a picture which confirms the school's own view of teaching over time. Good teaching engages students fully in their learning, so that they behave well. Teachers in these lessons have high expectations of what students can achieve. Their good subject knowledge ensures that they ask challenging questions that deepen students' thinking. They manage the work of teaching assistants very effectively, so that students who find it difficult to learn can keep pace with their classmates. These teachers make good use of information about students' progress to set them sharp, individual targets and tasks that speed up their learning.
- Sometimes teachers do not plan work that is sufficiently well matched to the needs of every student in the class. They miss opportunities to stretch students through independent work where they have to think for themselves. Most marking is regular and informative, but some teachers do not always check regularly enough that students are making the improvements that they have been asked to make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud of their school. A tone of mutual respect pervades the school and older students say that behaviour has improved a great deal during their time there. Students behave well in lessons and around the school and take an active part in other school activities. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are very polite and welcoming to visitors.
- Students have good opportunities to take responsibility and express their views. They are articulate and confident young people with a strong sense of right and wrong who say that they feel very safe in school. A few parents who completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) raised some concerns about bullying, but students say they are well taught how to protect themselves from all forms of bullying, including internet bullying and prejudice-based language and behaviour. They are not aware of any bullying at school but are sure that there is a range of adults in school who will deal quickly and effectively with any problems they may have.
- Exclusions have reduced dramatically over the last two years and attendance is above average.
- The school strives to ensure that all students in this predominantly White British community are well prepared for life in a more diverse society. This was an area for improvement in the last inspection. Students now have better opportunities in lessons to discuss with classmates of different heritage their cultural and religious backgrounds. They also meet visitors of different faiths and cultures in school, visit local places of worship and have strong links with a Kenyan school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders are very ambitious for the school. Together with the governors they have worked energetically, and with considerable success, to improve the school and tackle all the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. They have set in place a culture of continuing improvement that is overwhelmingly shared by staff.
- Senior leaders are well supported by subject leaders. However, the good new policies and procedures that they have put in place to improve the school have not yet had equal impact in all subjects.
- There has been a strong commitment to making all staff accountable for their performance and this has led to the improvements in teaching and students' achievement which have been marks of the school's good progress. The quality of teaching and tracking of students' progress are very regularly and rigorously monitored and both are closely linked to teachers' performance management and salary progression.
- Senior leaders have an incisive and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly of the quality of teaching. Teachers are very appreciative of the good system of professional development and the many opportunities it offers for the sharing of ideas and the improvement of their practice. While teachers are offered every opportunity to improve their performance, senior leaders and governors do not shrink from hard staffing decisions when necessary.
- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the care it takes to make sure that students make good progress, notably through the astute planning and impact of the use of the pupil premium to support those students who need extra support.
- The curriculum is well planned and the school takes due account of the aspirations of students and parents in its planning. The school adapts the curriculum regularly in light of students' performance in examinations and national developments, so that as many students as possible have opportunities to gain good GCSE qualifications and have clear routes into further study, training or work after Year 11.
- Through close partnership with the local college, a vocational training provider and a local business, the school arranges part-time vocational courses away from school for a few students

from Years 10 and 11. The school rigorously checks the quality of the courses and the attendance and progress of these students. Almost all students leave the courses with Level 1 (pre-GCSE) qualifications and sometimes with an offer of permanent work.

- The school benefits from good local authority support for an external evaluation of its work and governor training. The local authority also fosters partnership with other schools to support the school's own improvement. The impact of this support is evident in improved achievement in English and mathematics and in governance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance was an area for improvement in the last inspection and is now good. The current blend of well established governors and new appointments from a range of professional backgrounds and experience has made a significant contribution to the school's improvement. Governors are now fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and development planning and confidently hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance. Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a good understanding of assessment and other information that enables them to challenge proposed changes to school systems. Governors manage the school's finances well. For example, they ensure that salary progression is firmly linked to improvements in teaching and learning and keep a good oversight of the funding from the pupil premium.

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	106525
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	412822

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation School with Cooperative Trust
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	786
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Bradbury
Headteacher	David Lythgoe
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2009
Telephone number	01942 726842
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