

# Highfield Humanities College

Highfield Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY4 3JZ

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders have been ineffective in securing the essential improvements identified at the time of the last inspection. Students' achievement has declined.
- Not enough students make the progress they should in English, mathematics and science. This is particularly the case for boys and disadvantaged students.
- The proportions of disadvantaged students making expected progress are consistently low. Disadvantaged students make significantly less progress than their peers.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those who access the specialist resource provision, is inadequate.
- Students' writing skills and proficiency in mathematics are not strong enough to ensure they are well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment.
- Teaching is inadequate. Too few teachers plan lessons that interest students or meet their needs.
- The behaviour of a minority of students in lessons is inadequate. Students report that behaviour in some lessons over time is also poor and adversely affects the quality of their learning.
- The school's work to keep students safe is inadequate.
- Many students report that they would not feel confident asking an adult for help if they were bullied.
- Attendance is stubbornly below the national average for secondary schools.
- Leaders have not secured an accurate picture of current students' progress; consequently they are unable to gain a complete view of teachers' performance.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is inaccurate; it is based on a poor analysis of the evidence they have.
- Governors have been ineffective in challenging leaders to improve the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- The majority of students enjoy coming to school and value the support they receive from their teachers.
- The curriculum is largely broad and balanced. There are many opportunities for students to learn about other cultures and faiths.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with no prior notice to the school.
- Inspectors observed 25 part lessons from across a range of subjects, including in English, mathematics and science. Three lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also conducted four additional surveys of lesson activity, which included looking in detail at behaviour in lessons.
- Inspectors sampled work from a number of students in Year 8 and Year 10. They scrutinised students' workbooks, evaluating students' progress across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders with responsibility for attendance, behaviour and exclusions, teaching and learning and safeguarding. One inspector met with the acting leader who is coordinating special educational needs provision. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and an extract from the current school improvement plan. Inspectors also considered attendance registers, the school's own analyses of attendance and exclusions, documents relating to the performance management of teachers, minutes from governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors met with several groups of students, both formally and informally, and spoke to other students during break and lunchtimes. Inspectors surveyed a further 165 students anonymously to ascertain their views on behaviour, bullying and how well teachers help them learn in school.
- Inspectors considered 40 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- There were too few responses from parents to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, Parent View, to consider at the time of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Philippa Darley, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judith Straw	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Hilary Ward	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- Highfield Humanities College is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through a statement of special educational needs or the new education, health and care plan is lower than average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both well below the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, 'The SERF,' for physically disabled students. This is managed by the school. There are currently 10 students receiving support through this provision.
- The school uses Blackpool and the Fylde College and 4Tecomoto, a privately run organisation, to provide alternative curriculum provision for some students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

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

- Improve teaching, in order to raise the achievement of all students, but particularly for boys, disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs by:
  - ensuring all teachers have very high expectations, both of what students can achieve, and also of how students should behave and present their work at all times
  - rapidly ensuring that teachers gain an accurate understanding of students' current achievement in all subjects
  - ensuring teachers use available information to plan lessons that are engaging, and challenge students of all abilities to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of their subjects
  - ensuring students have regular opportunities to practise and develop the basic skills they need in literacy and mathematics
  - ensuring that all teachers regularly mark students' work, provide students with clear guidance on how to improve their learning, and check that this happens.
- Improve students' behaviour in lessons by:
  - providing more inspiring learning opportunities to motivate students and raise their expectations about how much they can achieve
  - improving students' understanding of the impact poor behaviour has on the progress they make.
- Urgently secure students' safety by:
  - working closely with students to review how the school deals with bullying, and build confidence across the whole school community that bullying will be dealt with quickly and effectively
  - working closely with students and their families to improve attendance so that it rapidly increases to be at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leaders, including governors, by:
  - ensuring all leaders communicate an uncompromising vision of excellence for all aspects of the school's work
  - quickly securing an accurate assessment of students' achievements across all subjects and year groups,

and using this to improve teaching and school improvement planning

- ensuring that leaders take effective steps to support staff in securing a consistent approach to managing behaviour
- ensuring leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is based on a thorough and frank analysis of student outcomes, and that this directly informs strategic improvement planning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders have been ineffective in securing the essential improvements needed to the quality of teaching, achievement, behaviour and attendance of students. Achievement has declined since the last inspection and the areas identified as requiring improvement from that inspection have not been tackled effectively.
- Leaders have not created a culture of excellence, in which positive behaviour is the norm and all teachers expect the absolute best of themselves and their students. Leaders' current capacity to secure improvement is limited and dependent upon external support.
- The headteacher knows that achievement is inadequate, however, school leaders at all levels have failed to evaluate their own effectiveness with sufficient rigour. Their evaluations describe the actions they have taken to try to improve aspects of the school's performance, but leaders do not use evidence to measure accurately the impact such actions have had on school performance.
- Leaders have failed to secure a detailed understanding of current achievement at the school. Subject leaders do not moderate or standardise teachers' assessments of students' progress robustly. Because of their incomplete understanding, leaders are unable to demonstrate that achievement is improving, particularly for those groups of students who have underachieved in the past. Moreover, leaders' evaluations of individual teacher's effectiveness are not informed by evidence that is securely based on students' outcomes.
- Leaders' evaluation of students' behaviour is far too generous; they describe students as 'generally well behaved, compliant and positively engaged in lessons'. Leaders have based their view of behaviour on their own lesson observations and analysis of the school's on-call system. They have not gathered enough evidence from staff at the school, nor from students; both of these groups report that behaviour is frequently poor and is ineffectively managed.
- Due to weak self-evaluation, school improvement planning is ineffective. The planning that was shared with inspectors missed some of the school's key priorities, such as eradicating inadequate teaching and poor behaviour in the classroom. It does not reflect the urgency of improvement that is needed.
- The curriculum is largely broad and balanced; it enables students to study an appropriate range of subjects. However, leaders' decision to introduce GCSE studies one year early for current Year 9 students means their course of study does not meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a suitable focus in the curriculum on studying the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; however, students' basic skills in literacy and mathematics are not successfully promoted across the curriculum.
- While students receive independent advice about their qualification choices, they report that this is not sufficient for them to make informed decisions about their futures. Only a small proportion of students study single science courses at GCSE and this potentially limits their future choices. In 2014, only a third of the students leaving Year 11 went on to study Advanced levels. This was a relatively small proportion given their ability levels on entering the school.
- The school provides an interesting range of enrichment opportunities through visits, residentials and external visitors, all of which broaden students' understanding of their local and national communities. Students also have opportunities to visit foreign countries and experience different international cultures. Some elements of the curriculum, such as in religious education, contribute to students' understanding of traditional British values.
- The local authority identifies the school as one that is causing concern; it has recently allocated substantial external support to the leadership of the school. Local authority support has had limited impact on improving leadership in the short term.
- Safeguarding arrangements, such as in relation to the safe recruitment of staff, meet statutory regulations. Leaders have not ensured that all students are safe, as some have high levels of absence and improving their attendance is not given a sufficiently high priority. Leaders have not ensured that students feel safe from bullying and intimidation.
- The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Records from governing body meetings show that governors have started to ask searching questions and are challenging the validity of the information they receive. Governors are clearly concerned about the inaccuracy of leaders' predictions of student achievement by the end of Key Stage 4. Governors have been too reliant on the information they have received from the headteacher, and do not have the necessary skills to be able to gather an independent view of the school's performance.
  - While governors have raised questions about the effectiveness of teaching and the impact this has on

students' achievement, they have not raised enough questions about the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders in the school. Governors recognise that leaders have had limited impact on improving significant aspects of the school's performance, but have not addressed this.

- Governors receive reports on how pupil premium funding has been allocated and spent. They recognise that some of these funds have been wasted in the past and have had a minimal impact on the attainment of disadvantaged students. Some of the funding is used to provide alternative provision for students who achieved very few appropriate qualifications last year, consequently, governors have not secured equality of opportunity for these students.
- Governors oversee other aspects of the school's finances well and the school has never had a deficit budget. They have allocated appropriate resources to employing a full-time officer to work with families to improve attendance but they do not yet receive enough detailed information to demonstrate that this is having an impact on improving the attendance of groups of students.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is inadequate.
- The behaviour in lessons of a significant minority of students is poor. Students report that behaviour is entirely dependent on the ability of the teacher to control the class. Over a third of students report that behaviour in lessons regularly disrupts their learning.
- Students' attitudes to learning are poor. Even those students who behave well and want to achieve frequently produce work that is carelessly written and poorly presented. There are few minimum expectations about presentation of work that are enforced by teachers or understood by students, consequently, the quality of work in some students' workbooks is very poor.
- Teachers are also concerned about the behaviour of students in lessons. The majority of staff who responded to the questionnaire reported that behaviour was not well managed.
- Most students cooperate well with each other in lessons and around the school. They socialise well together and the vast majority report that they have friends in school. Students are proud of the impressive learning environment and facilities at their school, and they look after them well.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- Students know about different types of bullying and understand that the use of derogatory language is unacceptable; however, some students report that bullying regularly happens at the school. A third of students reported that they would not be confident that adults in school would deal with bullying effectively. Some students said that adults would ignore instances of bullying and only take effective action when it had 'escalated'.
- Attendance has been low for the last three years. It remains at or near the bottom ten per cent of secondary schools nationally. The attendance of disadvantaged students and for some disabled students and those with special educational needs remains particularly low. Rates of persistent absence have fallen slightly over the last two years, but remain above the national average. Leaders are unable to secure the safety of some students because they are not on the school premises.
- External, fixed-term exclusions have fallen, and are now similar to the national average.
- The school's procedures for checking off-site activity, for guaranteeing students' health and safety in the classroom, and for ensuring that visitors to school assemblies are suitable, are all appropriate.

## The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, particularly in literacy and mathematics, students make inadequate progress. Students do not develop the essential skills they need in writing and mathematics securely in order to make rapid progress, or to be successful in the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough; consequently, students are not inspired to do the best they can. Low expectations are reflected in the quantity and quality of written work in books. Not all teachers command the respect of their classes, and, when respect is not present, students achieve very little.
- Teachers do not use what students already know, understand and can do to plan work that interests and

engages them so that they can make progress. Work is too easy for some students and too hard for others. Almost half of students surveyed by inspectors said that they found their lessons uninteresting.

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking, both within and across subject departments. Some teachers mark students' work thoroughly, and give precise guidance on how students can improve. Others, 'tick' work and give no additional guidance, or make bland statements such as 'keep working hard'. Feedback does not focus enough on what was learnt, nor does it pick up on misconceptions nor recognise that students have found the work too easy.
- Variability in teaching is also true for disabled students and those with special educational needs. In some classes, these students are supported well, with adapted resources, which enable them to make good progress. In other classes, the teachers have not assessed the needs of the students well enough. They set work that is too easy; students complete it quickly, and are not challenged to develop their knowledge and understanding in any depth.
- Some teaching is more effective and, in these lessons, students' progress is good. Some teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to challenge students' thinking. They have high expectations and students respond positively by extending their oral and written responses. Students who experience such effective teaching are keenly interested in their work and can clearly describe how their learning has developed and improved over time.

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Students enter the school with attainment that is in line with the national average year on year. By the end of Key Stage 4, the standards they reach, particularly in attaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, are well below average. The progress they make across a number of subjects is inadequate.
- Given their starting points, the proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are below average, and have declined over the last two years. This is particularly so in mathematics and for boys.
- In 2013, boys achieved, on average, a full grade lower than girls in English. The gap between boys and girls in this subject was double the national average. This gap closed marginally in 2014, but this was only due to the relative underachievement of girls. In mathematics, boys have consistently achieved less well than girls in the last two years. In 2014, less than half of boys made expected progress in mathematics.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students in both English and mathematics is poor, and was lower in 2014 than in 2013. In 2013, disadvantaged students were two thirds of a GCSE grade behind other students in the school in English, and almost a full grade behind in mathematics. The gap narrowed in English in 2014, not because disadvantaged students achieved a higher standard, in fact their progress was weaker in this year. The gap narrowed because other, non-disadvantaged, students achieved at a significantly low level. In 2013, disadvantaged students in school achieved a grade lower than non-disadvantaged students nationally in English and more than a grade lower than non-disadvantaged students nationally in mathematics.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is inadequate. This is also the case for those students accessing the specialist resource provision. The pattern of progress for these students is highly variable. Some make better than expected progress in English and mathematics, however, a significant proportion make little progress over time and a few fall back from where they were when they joined the school. The needs of these students are not being met effectively, neither within the resource provision, nor in mainstream classes.
- The most-able students make expected progress in English, but not in mathematics. Too few most-able students exceed expected progress and achieve the highest grades at GCSE across the majority of subjects in the school as a consequence of low expectations and insufficient challenge for these students.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations, nonetheless achievement is poor.
- The overall progress made by current students is unclear because the information held by the school on achievement is unreliable. The quality of students' work seen in lessons and in their workbooks, demonstrates that insufficient attention is given to securing students' basic skills in writing and mathematics. This is a significant barrier to students making the progress they should across all subjects.
- Those students attending alternative provision who studied engineering in 2014 all succeeded in achieving an appropriate qualification, some at a very high standard. Other students were far less successful, leaving school at the end of Key Stage 4 without good vocational or English and mathematics qualifications.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119732
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	452798

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

<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>	1,114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Fisher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 310925
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