

# Standish Community High School

Kenyon Road, Standish, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 0NX

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- From their typically above average starting points, students in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress. By Year 11, standards in GCSE examinations are consistently significantly above average. The proportion of students reaching the highest grades is much higher than average, especially in English.
- Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching means that students make good progress. The teaching of English is very strong. Interesting tasks and activities enthuse and challenge students of varying abilities. The teaching of mathematics is improving.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. It goes to great lengths to support all students. Students feel very safe. The student support service is highly regarded, helping students to achieve the best they can.
- Students' behaviour is good. They show respect towards each other and adults. Most students generally concentrate well and show plenty of enthusiasm.
- Attendance is above average and fixed-term exclusions are low.
- Leaders' expectations of what every student is capable of achieving are very high.
- The new headteacher is already having a positive impact. A new system for tracking students' progress even more carefully is paying dividends.
- Senior and middle leaders know the school very well. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and students' achievement and what is needed to improve them even further. Teaching and achievement, as a result, continue to improve.
- Governors challenge and support the school well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in mathematics is not as good as it is in English. Students are not given enough opportunities to apply their basic mathematical skills as part of work across the curriculum subjects.
- Information about students' skills and knowledge is not yet used consistently well to plan and provide work that matches students' varying needs and abilities.
- The quality of marking across subjects is inconsistent. Not all students are clear about what they need to do to improve. They are not always given time to respond to teachers' advice and learn from their mistakes.
- Leaders are yet to ensure that disadvantaged students achieve as well as non-disadvantaged students in the school. Gaps in the attainment between these two groups of students, especially in mathematics, are yet to be successfully closed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 parts of lessons, looked at a wide range of the students’ exercise books and work. They also conducted a walk around the school with the headteacher to observe learning.
- Inspectors met with different groups of staff and considered the 67 responses to the staff survey. Teachers talked about their views of the school and about the professional development opportunities they have when they met with inspectors for feedback about their lessons.
- Inspectors met with groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4. They also talked with students informally during breaks and lunchtimes. Students’ behaviour and attitudes to learning were observed at the start and end of the school day, at breaks and lunchtimes, as well as during lessons.
- Inspectors considered the views of 81 parents’ responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They considered the school’s own survey of parents’ views and a letter from a parent.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors looked at detailed information about a number of students to review how well the school supports vulnerable students.
- A number of the school’s policies and records were reviewed and the information on the school’s website was also considered.

## Inspection team

Susan Hayter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Standish Community High School is a larger than average secondary school.
- Most students are from white British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals and for those students who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 take part in a vocational programme off site, provided by Western Skills Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching even further so that students' achievement improves to be outstanding, particularly in mathematics, by making sure that:
  - the recently extended range of support programmes aimed at closing the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in the school is effective and that disadvantaged students reach their challenging targets
  - all teachers follow the school's new arrangements for checking what students know and can do and use this information to provide work that closely meets students' varying needs and abilities
  - teachers always respond quickly to how well students are learning within lessons so that a good pace of learning is maintained for all
  - the quality of marking is consistently good and that all students are clear about what they need to do to improve and are given the time to respond to teachers' advice
  - more opportunities are provided for students to apply their basic mathematical skills as part of work across the curriculum subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leaders' expectations of what students are capable of achieving are very high. Leaders' effectiveness is evident in the standards that students reach, which are consistently well above average. This, along with students' good behaviour, positive attitudes and excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, prepares students very well for future education, training and employment.
- The new headteacher has quickly settled into post and has already had an impact on improving students' achievement by developing the quality of teaching even further. A new system for tracking students' progress has been introduced, which quickly identifies any students, or groups of students, whose achievement falls below their ambitious targets. Leaders swiftly pinpoint any variances in achievement and actions are taken promptly to promote equality of opportunity for all.
- The pupil premium is used to increasingly good effect. The recently extended range of programmes of support aimed at improving the achievement of disadvantaged students for example, is already paying dividends. The achievement of this group is speeding up quickly. However, leaders have yet to ensure that the gaps in the attainment at the end of Year 11 between disadvantaged students and the non-disadvantaged in the school are successfully closed, especially in mathematics.
- Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the school, including what is working well and why. They have a clear plan of where and how students' achievement can improve even further. They, along with middle leaders, such as those responsible for leading subjects, regularly review students' progress. The very strong leadership of some subjects, for example English, is used as a model for other subjects.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Senior leaders have created an ethos of ambition among staff to 'become outstanding'. Leaders take the appropriate action when needed to address poor teaching performance, if it occurs. They regularly observe lessons, and this, along with a close and frequent review of students' work in their books, ensures that they have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and where and how it can be even better. They know that there remains some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which teachers check what students know and can do and what they do with this to plan lessons. Similarly, leaders have yet to ensure that the quality of marking is equally good across all subjects of the curriculum.
- The performance management of teachers, although previously effective, has been recently reviewed and strengthened even further. Teachers' targets are now even more closely linked to the achievement of all groups of students and the school's priorities for improvement.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that motivate students. Students are encouraged to opt for subjects in which they will achieve well and will enjoy. The vocational option taken by a small number of students is relevant and enables students to achieve vocation-based qualifications. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on extending students' reading, writing and communication skills. Leaders have yet to ensure that work within the various curriculum subjects provides students with enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills, however.
- The curriculum enables students to develop a good understanding of British values and tolerance and respect for the diversity of life in modern Britain. Students appreciate the opportunity to take part in democratic processes and to influence changes in the school, such as the system for rewarding good behaviour. Assemblies provide opportunities for students to learn about first-hand experiences of different faiths. Visits to places of worship of different faiths increase students' knowledge, understanding and tolerance of people with other faiths.
- The school provides a good level of impartial advice and guidance to support students' choices for the next steps in their education. This is evident in the wide range of colleges and courses attended by the students beyond Year 11.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is exceptional. During the inspection, displays of student-made poppies reflect their knowledge and understanding of the Remembrance Day. Under the very skilful guidance from a teacher, students discussed the horrifying results of extremist views linking historical terrorist activities with the causes of war.
- The views of parents are overwhelmingly positive about almost all aspects of the school's work. They particularly appreciate the very positive impact the school has on the achievement and well-being of disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to this good school. It uses the skills of the school staff to support other schools within the community.
- Leaders and governors make sure the school meets all safeguarding requirements. This includes making safeguarding checks and appropriate risk assessments for those students working at the Western Skills

Centre.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are well informed and provide a good balance of support and challenge to the school's leaders. Individual governors bring a broad range of skills and expertise and use their own professional knowledge to contribute effectively to agreeing the school's strategic direction.
- Financial management is robust. Governors track the impact of the use of the pupil premium on the achievement of disadvantaged students. They know that there is more to do to close the gap between their attainment with that of other non-disadvantaged students in the school.
- Governors ask questions about the impact of new school developments and check that changes are helping the school in its quest to become an outstanding school. They ensure that the targets set are highly challenging.
- Governors have a good understanding of nationally published data on how well the school performs in comparison to other schools nationally. They receive reports about the quality of teaching, and check these carefully to ensure that they reflect what they know about students' achievement. This places them well to challenge the information they are given and to ensure that any pay awards reflect the effectiveness of teachers' performance in the classroom.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Around school, students conduct themselves well. They show respect towards each other and adults. Students particularly appreciate the lengths the staff go to support them so that they can 'be the best they can'. Students take pride in their school and dress smartly.
- In lessons, students generally concentrate well and most show plenty of enthusiasm. These positive attitudes contribute to their good progress. Students confidently ask questions and independently research subjects. Many students were seen to persevere at tasks they found difficult.
- Occasionally, a few students do not participate as enthusiastically in lessons and lose concentration and this slows their progress. Disruption to learning as a result of poor behaviour, however, is rare.
- The school has robust systems to support pupils whose circumstances could make them vulnerable. The school's student support service, for example, provides a very good level of support to any student experiencing difficulties, including managing their own behaviour, in or outside of school. Students spoke openly and with confidence about the support they receive.
- The school's record of fixed-term exclusions shows that they are low overall. There have been no permanent exclusions for many years.
- Attendance is consistently above average. Students attend regularly and arrive promptly to lessons and are ready to work. Robust systems are in place to support and improve the attendance of the few students who are regularly absent.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students are taught very effectively to identify and manage potential risks to their well-being. They know how to keep safe in a variety of situations, including when using the Internet, mobile technologies and social media and how to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles.
- Discussions with students show that they feel very safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including those based on prejudices such as name-calling. Students are confident that bullying rarely happens, but when it does, it is managed well by the staff.
- Students are very aware about the impact extremist views can have. They know how to make safe decisions about who they should befriend or look to as role models. This prepares them extremely well to become tolerant young adults.
- Most parents agree that their children are kept safe and happy at the school.
- Students who attend provision off site are kept safe.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good, and sometimes outstanding teaching over time ensures that students make good progress. This

was evidenced in lessons observed, through the school's own records of checking the quality of teaching and seen in students' work in their books.

- The teaching of reading, writing and communication skills is particularly effective. Students are given plenty of opportunities to use and apply their skills across the various subjects of the curriculum. Students receive good advice about how to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar and, as a result, write confidently in all subjects. Teaching ensures that students become very effective communicators, as demonstrated to inspectors in their conversations with a range of students. Students confidently ask their teachers questions and independently research subjects. Many students were seen to persevere at tasks they found difficult.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Progress in mathematics lessons is now good, due to more effective teaching. Teachers carefully check which students have understood what is being taught. They use this information to challenge those students who have understood with harder questions and ensure that effective support is given to those who are not as confident. Students' progress in mathematics, however, is sometimes hampered because opportunities for using and applying basic mathematical skills as part of work across the curriculum subjects are not yet fully developed.
- Teaching ensures that the most-able students achieve well. High-achieving students, for example, deepen their knowledge and understanding by explaining to students who are less confident the methodology for answering word questions in mathematics.
- The careful and sensitive deployment of skilled teaching assistants supports those who need additional help. The range of programmes to support disadvantaged students is now extending and this is helping them to make better progress. Expectations of what they can achieve are now higher. However, these improvements are yet to be reflected in results in GCSE examinations.
- New arrangements for making sure that teachers use the information they collect about what students already know and can do to plan lessons which more closely reflect the varying needs and abilities of students are paying dividends. However, not all staff are yet adopting these arrangements. There remains some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which teachers check what students know and can do and what they do with this information. Teachers do not always respond quickly enough to what the students are learning within lessons. This means that sometimes work for students does not fully meet their needs and this slows their progress.
- Overall, the quality of marking and feedback to students about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is good. Marking is particularly effective in English. Teachers' very helpful comments and guidance on how to improve, as well as clear evidence of students acting upon their advice, result in students deepening their understanding and making at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. However, in other subjects marking is not yet as effective. Not all students are clear about what they need to do to improve or given the time to respond to teachers' advice.
- Some teaching results in students making excellent progress. Students of all abilities in a Spanish lesson, for example, were provided with consistently high levels of challenge throughout.
- The school closely monitors the teaching of students following vocational courses. The good achievement of these students is testimony to the good teaching over time at the centre.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- When students join in Year 7, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics overall is usually above average. Students achieve well in both Key Stages 3 and 4, and so by the end of Year 11, the proportion of students who achieve five GCSEs at grade A\* to C, including in English and mathematics, is significantly above average.
- Students achieve particularly well in English. In Year 11 in 2013, almost all students made the expected rate of progress and the proportion that did better than this was well above the proportion that did so nationally. Unvalidated results in Year 11 in 2014 show that results are slightly lower, but are still good. This represents good, and for some, outstanding progress.
- Attainment in English throughout the school is also much higher than that typically found. Across the year groups, students read often, widely and with much enjoyment. Students speak confidently about their understanding of what they read. The small number of students who enter Year 7 with below average levels of attainment in reading and writing are given effective help to catch up quickly.
- Although students achieve well in mathematics, overall, it is not as good as in English. In Year 11 in 2013 in mathematics, the proportion of students making the expected rate of progress and more than expected progress compared favourably to the proportion that did so nationally, but the proportion making more

than expected progress was much lower than in English. The school was disappointed by the 2014 results in GCSE examinations in mathematics, as the proportion of students achieving an A\* to C grade and those reaching A\* and A grades both dipped. However, school data and inspection evidence including observations of progress in lessons and in students' book show that, across the year groups, students are making good progress in mathematics.

- Previously the school has entered students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics and in core and additional science. This has now been revised. Only in exceptional cases are students entered before the summer term in Year 11. The proportion of students to be entered for the higher tier mathematics paper is significantly higher than previously.
- The most-able students achieve well. In 2013, the proportion of students who achieve A\* and A grades in GCSE examinations was well above average in both English and mathematics. A significant number achieve the highest grades at GCSE in all their chosen subjects. In 2014, in twelve subjects, well over a third of students achieved the top grades. The achievement of the most able is well supported by a range of challenging activities and opportunities, including taking part in national mathematics challenges and writing competitions.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well. The support given to those students who need extra help is discrete, sensitive and effective.
- In Year 11 in 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged students in English was about one grade lower than other non-disadvantaged students in the school and nationally. In mathematics, it was about one third of a grade lower than other non-disadvantaged students in the school and about two thirds of a grade lower than nationally. In the school, the proportion of disadvantaged students making the expected rate of progress and the proportion doing better than this are lower than non-disadvantaged pupils, particularly in mathematics. School data and inspection evidence show that the achievement of disadvantaged students across the school is improving. A wider and more effective range of support programmes is now on offer and this is helping to speed up progress across the school. More disadvantaged students are now doing well. However, these improvements are yet to be reflected in results at the end of Year 11. Gaps in attainment in mathematics for example, widened in 2014.
- Students attending alternative provision achieve very well over a broad range of vocational subjects. They are well supported and are highly motivated by the courses.
- Students achieve well in a wide range of subjects beyond English and mathematics. In Year 11 in 2014, in religious education, for example, the performance of students was exceptional with almost two thirds reaching an A\* or A grade in GCSE examinations. A well above average proportion of students also reached the highest grades in physics, chemistry and biology.
- Achievement in the arts and sports are celebrated. Students talk confidently and with pride of their sporting achievements.



## 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>	106531
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	448325

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>	1,224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Hardy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Pollard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01257 422265
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